

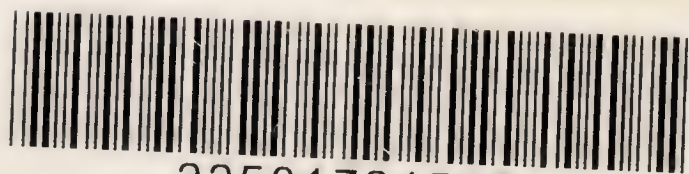
Doctor Vanderkemp

A. D. Martin

BZP(KEMP)



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DOCTOR VANDERKEMP

By the Same Author

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JOHANNES THEODORUS VANDERKEMP

DOCTOR VANDERKEMP

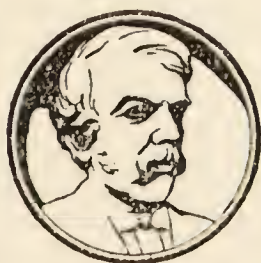
By
A. D. MARTIN

The first of human concerns is religion, and it is
the salient feature of the modern centuries.

. *Lord Acton.*

. . . . There cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision
and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond-
man, freeman : But Christ is all, and in all.

. *S. Paul.*



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TO
MY DAUGHTER
MARGARET

Don Pedro : Out of question you were born in
a merry hour.

Béatrice : No, sure, my lord, but then there
was a star danced, and under that
was I born.

Much Ado About Nothing.

PREFACE

TWO facts have moved me to write this book. In the first place, the subject was a remarkable man, whose spiritual experience, as laid bare by himself, exhibits a quality worthy of the closest study. The Church of Christ ought to possess the rich treasure of this man's interior life. I have tried faithfully to unfold it. In the second place, at a somewhat advanced age he went out to South Africa as a pioneer missionary, and there at once became a conspicuous figure in colonial affairs. Whether men liked him or disliked him, they could not ignore him. The histories of the Cape give him considerable attention. Unhappily, often being based upon traditional prejudice and in every instance upon insufficient acquaintance with original documents, these have contributed rather to the formation of a distorted picture of his character and principles. To many, indeed, he has been a subject of the most adverse criticism on account of his championship of native interests. To set him truly before the Church and, if indeed that be possible, before the colonial world, has been the purpose of this book. Seen with unprejudiced eyes, he emerges from a cloud of calumny as a most gallant gentleman, a scholar, a saint, even though in the last category he illustrates a line of Shakespeare :

They say best men are moulded out of faults.

There is no other full memoir of Dr. Vanderkemp in our language, only a pamphlet of forty-two pages published in 1812. In Holland a sketch not much longer (sixty-one pages) appeared in 1896, entitled *Dr. Johannes Theodorus Van der Kemp, the Apostle of South Africa; Commemorated after a hundred years*, by W. van Oosterwijk Bruyn. This seems to have been based upon a biography by a relative of Dr. Vanderkemp published in 1864, but the writer, not having

had access to the intimate English papers which concern his subject, has fallen into one or two errors. The present work thus fills a gap in the literature, not only of missions, but of South Africa. It is based upon a large number of documents, letters, journals, reports, etc., in the archives of the London Missionary Society. These include an autobiography of Dr. Vanderkemp, written in two hundred and nineteen quarto pages, unfortunately incomplete, and considerably damaged by weather stains. It appears to be a translation from a lost Dutch original. There survives, for a small portion of the narrative, a second translation in considerably better English. The fact of the existence of these two forms of the autobiography has led me to think myself justified in making certain verbal alterations here and there, where our English idiom seems to require them. The reader, however, may rely upon my faithfulness to the sense and intention of the document.

My thanks are due to the Rev. Edward Shillito, M.A., and to Mr. David Chamberlin, of the London Missionary Society, at whose invitation this work has been written. They have helped not a little in suggesting both the materials to be employed and the type of book desired.

At a somewhat late stage in my work, I had the privilege of reading the relevant portion of an unpublished University thesis, dealing with South African concerns, by Miss K. Reynolds, M.A., of the Park School, Preston, from the perusal of which I was able to gather some further details concerning native affairs. My thanks are also expressed to Messrs. Macmillan & Co., for permission to quote in full *The Genesis of a Missionary*, from the *Collected Poems of Frederick W. H. Myers*.

A. D. M.

Danbury,
Essex.

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DOCTOR VANDERKEMP

CHAPTER I

FORTITER

ROTTERDAM, the birth-place of Erasmus, gave birth also to the subject of this book, a man not indeed of world-eminence, but yet one whom any city might be proud to own amongst her noblest sons. In his boyhood he played in her streets and courts, and wandered beside her swiftly-flowing Maas which receives the waters of the Rhine and its tributaries, and is linked thereby with noble cities of German culture—Cologne and Bonn and Frankfort, to mention but three mighty names. He saw the river in the gaiety of sunshine and in moonlight mystery. He watched the ships unload their rich cargoes from the far-off Indies and the Cape of Good Hope. He saw, too, with mental vision, the tropic-lands from which they came, with their strangely-garbed men and women, and their richly-plumed birds, and monstrous insects and wild creatures of the forest. He looked down the rushing tides to the river's big mouth as it gaped upon North Sea mists, shrouded in which, not so many leagues away, lay England with world-famous London and ships of war that matched all the daring and might of Holland's splendid fleet.

Rotterdam, like all great river-side cities, was a place for the commerce of ideas, since merchandise and mind are apt to travel together, and the thoughts of men are quickened more by rivers than by any other of the earth-powers. At one time, indeed, people used to spiritualise streams and invest great waters with a soul to which prayers and sacrifices might be offered. Even in less credulous times the routine-ridden town-mind, obsessed by human mechanism, finds at least partial redemption at the river-side.

In the year 1749, some hundreds of miles inland, at Frankfort, on one branch of that great tree of waters which unfolds through the coasts of Holland, Goethe was born. A little earlier, on the 17th of May, 1747, at Rotterdam, on another of its stems, he of whom I write, Johannes Theodorus Van der Kemp, entered the world—a man who in versatility of mind was no unworthy contemporary of the many-sided Goethe. His father, Cornelis Van der Kemp, was a well respected minister and professor of theology in the Lutheran Church, and such glimpses of him as our records supply indicate a man of honour and piety, one who would bring up his children in true Christian nurture, aided therein by their mother, Anna Maria Van Teijlingen, daughter of the burgomaster of Maastad. The family name derived from Kampen—a town illustrious as the residence, in the 14th and 15th centuries, of St. Thomas à Kempis. In that same town, the cousin of Johannes, Francis Adrian Van der Kemp was born, a man of considerable distinction in the history of Holland and of America.

School-lessons must have come easily to Johannes, for his memory was retentive. He acquired foreign languages more readily than most. The boy Goethe at Frankfort had the same linguistic skill. In his autobiography the latter relates how in his early days he wrote a romance with six or seven characters in it, brothers and sisters, and scattered them in different parts of the world, so that each learned to write to the others in a different language. With such pleasantness and ease did the German boy master the chief languages of Europe, and it must have been at the same time and with similar facility that John Vanderkemp—as we shall in future Anglicise his name—laid the foundations for his subsequent proficiency in no less than sixteen different tongues, ancient and modern.

The beginning of all this was in the school named after Erasmus, whence he passed to the Latin School at Dordrecht and then, when sixteen years old, to the University of Leyden. At this last seminary Philosophy and Religion interested him. In addition to the specific training for which he was entered he found time to attend theological lectures. The whole problem of existence, the meaning and character of the Universe, the whence and the whither of the great river of Life, was always

challenging the religion in which he had been brought up, and calling for a fresh interpretation. His immediate concern, however, was to qualify for the medical profession. In preparation for this he showed himself a vigorous and independent student, with something of the rebel in his disposition, keen to detect a flaw in argument, quick to suspect unworthy motive or mere professionalism in his teachers—in short very much like undergraduates of every century. Some of his instructors disgusted him, but for one of them he had a feeling almost of hero-worship. The balance, unfortunately, turned decidedly against medical men generally, their beliefs and their practices. “That which is usually termed ‘Rational Medical Science’,” he declared, “I regarded as altogether incompatible with the character of a noble and generous man, and I resolved to seek after a more honourable profession as soon as possible.”

This decision was hastened by the success of his elder brother, Didericus, in receiving an appointment as University Professor of Ecclesiastical History. Pride is one of the faults of which John Vanderkemp makes frequent confession in his autobiography. The idea of being merely a student in the same University in which his brother was a professor was too galling for endurance. Abruptly declaring to his parents that he would not submit to such an indignity he threw up his career and entered the Army, joining the Dragoon Guards. Throughout his life John Vanderkemp carried himself with a certain dignity, feeling keenly what was due to himself, and sometimes in his younger days displaying a haughtiness that was akin to contempt for those from whom he differed.

Thirty-six years after the beginning of his military career, in a distant part of the world, he met one who had known him when a lieutenant of Dragoons and they recalled to each other many a jovial meeting in the coffee-houses of Leyden, and some things, perhaps, which Vanderkemp would have been glad to forget. For at that time, as his autobiography records, he was a “faint-hearted slave” to his own lusts. In disposition he resembled St. Augustine—full-blooded, intellectual, active and ambitious, with a grave susceptibility to sensuous pleasures. He possessed the charm of a fine physique. Tall, lithe and graceful, with fine and even beautiful features, an eye keen

and fiery under delicately-shaped brows, he was attractive to women and by them was ensnared. Bunyan relates in his *Life and Death of Mr. Badman* that a great man of his time almost lost his sight through the practices of sensuality. "His physicians," says Bunyan, "were sent for, to whom he told his disease; but they told him that they could do him no good, unless he would forbear his women. Nay, then, said he, farewell sweet sight." Vanderkemp did not fall so low, but yet often declared to an intimate friend that he saw with open eyes he was hastening on to destruction and chose to take no other road. As with St. Augustine there were in him the "two soul-sides"—an earthward nature, full of passionate heat, sinning *fortiter*, and at the same time an open-eyed philosophical activity of the mind, thinking *fortiter*, and as the result of early training, "favourably inclined towards the truths of the Christian Religion," whilst as yet knowing nothing of them by spiritual discernment. So it was that even whilst involved in carnal entanglements he yet formally made confession of faith and was admitted to full membership of the Dutch Reformed Church.

Some arrest of his downward tendency came through illnesses and accidents which impressed him with the precariousness of life. Small-pox nearly carried him away. During his convalescence he spent long seasons in prayer and gained some relief, only however, to fall again. A foolhardy prank in the river nearly cost him his life and his escape appealed to him as a particular providence. Still the pull of vice was strong.

There was a certain "peruke-maker's wife" who emerges from "all the rest of the women" of his acquaintance as the object of his chief affection. She passes through Vanderkemp's story as one drawn irresistibly to him and submitting to be taken up and sent away at her lover's bidding. Again one is reminded of St. Augustine. "I stole her," says Vanderkemp, "from her husband and took her to Leyden where I lived publicly with her. Being affected by the grief I caused to my kind father, I left off living with her soon after, while she at my request went to live at the Hague." At this point in Vanderkemp's autobiography the manuscript is blotted and in places

indecipherable through weather stains, though they might well have been the stains of tears. What follows tells enough to enable us to fill in the blanks with the records of sorrow. "Notwithstanding this gave my father much he died not long after, and I have reason to drive away the thoughts conduct hastened his death."

A violent revulsion of feeling led him almost immediately to resume his impropriety. By his father's will he was to come into full possession of certain property, if and when he renounced all connection with the peruke-maker's wife. Three grave and respectable men, the executors of the will, conveyed this information to the young man, assuring him that nothing would give them greater pleasure than to place the property in his hands, as soon as he was prepared to give the necessary assurances. One sees these dear good men, probably elders in his father's kirk, nervously fingering legal documents, bowing, perhaps scraping somewhat, for the heir is Cavalry Captain now and has an air of command. "Would Captain Vanderkemp be so good as to assure them?" Sword-lights sharpen in the young eyes. "Gentlemen, it is not my custom to acquire money at the expense of freedom from prying eyes." The worthy men depart, shrugging their shoulders. "I rejected their condition with disdain," says Vanderkemp, "and brought the object of my improper love to Leyden where I took her to me in my own home before the eyes of the whole world."

In the following year, 1773, a daughter was born to him. He had the little one baptised and he offered continual prayers to God on its behalf. As he prayed there came upon him increasingly a sense of his own misconduct. He could not look upon his child without realising that a brand was upon her from which, if she grew up, she would be bound to suffer. Nor could he disguise from himself the grave injury he had done to her mother. There were some heart-searchings in both parents, and on his side candid acknowledgment of his responsibility. At length an agreement was reached between them. Illicit connection was to cease. Yet she would live in his house as a friend. "And," he writes, "if it should please God to take away her husband from this life before us and she should

behave herself unblameably, I hoped I should not be disinclined to recompense the present injury by a lawful marriage." Some broken enigmatic sentences follow this highly characteristic undertaking, suggestive that his whole manner of life at this time was far from worthy. The poor peruke-maker's wife now disappears from our view, leaving the child she had brought into the world to its father's care. The sequel shows that she did not continue in his home, nor did he ever marry her.

Five years passed in military duties, and also it is clear, in grave irregularity of life. His little daughter absorbed much of his affection. He was mindful of her religious, as well as of her physical, necessities. Some remorse bit into him from the very light of her pure eyes. One day there came a startling experience. He had long discontinued all church-attendance. But for once he found it most desirable to go to public worship. A certain general for whom he had great regard and who, apparently, was keenly interested in him, sought his company to a particular service. The text of the sermon on this occasion was from *Psalms* 101, 2 *O when wilt Thou come unto me?* The sermon quickly faded from the young officer's mind, as sermons mostly do from minds of that order, but the text took on a luminous form in the dark background of his inner life. For three years it wrought in his mind until it did its work. "Whatever circumstances I was in," he says, "whether lying in bed, standing up, whether in earnest thought or committing wickedness, everywhere, sometimes innumerable times in a day this sigh fell upon me 'When wilt Thou come unto me?' by whom occasioned and implanted I knew not." The texts which find men are often the reflex of their own seekings. The real inner life of Vanderkemp at this period was a ceaseless thrusting forth of inquiry, a groping for reality, the forward feeling and sweep of imagination into the Unknown, and this at last became anticipation of a Presence, faith in the sound of approaching footsteps.

Considering these years as a whole it is evident that all this young man did was done strongly, with pride, with ambition, and even with recklessness. In sinning, in working, in sport, in thinking, he was ever John Vanderkemp, a living man, full

of comradeship, one who knew the joy of living dangerously and who, because of this, was likely to be a chosen vessel of his Maker. For here the uncouth lines of *Bishop Blougram's Apology* find illustration :

. When the fight begins within himself,
A man's worth something. God stoops o'er his head,
Satan looks up between his feet—both tug——
He's left, himself, i' the middle : the soul wakes
And grows.

The river flows *fortiter*, sweeping on to meet and battle with the wide sea itself, and all the deep can do will not turn back that ardent stream, but absorb, transmute and carry it in its bosom to where the moon lifts it up into purity, and releases it again to strange coasts.

CHAPTER II

MARRIAGE

IN Vanderkemp's time Leyden possessed a number of low-class dancing-halls, frequented by persons of questionable character. In one of these he was often to be seen. He made no secret of his habits. When the frolic was over he would shake off its manners and find transition into the cultivated society of the regimental mess no difficult thing.

Now, at ten o'clock one November morning in 1778, setting out to his military duties, his attention was drawn to a girl passing near the guard-house. By her dress evidently she was a spinner. Something in her face and form brought back his favourite evening pastimes. The scene of the night before—a medley of men of all sorts and of girls bedecked in cheap finery, painted, powdered, full of laughter, often obviously besieging him, sometimes alluring him with the shyness of the débutante—sparkled in his memory. Surely he had seen this girl amongst them, at some time or other, but not, he thought, the previous night. Approaching her he inquired how it was she had not been present at the dance as usual and at once saw his mistake. She was not the girl he knew, and moreover she showed entire ignorance of dancing-halls. But she did not shrink from a few moments' conversation with the handsome young officer who had thus accosted her, for she lived in sad home-circumstances and needed a friend and felt, as apparently women so often did feel about John Vanderkemp, that here was a strong personality, a man who might be a refuge from the storm and a shadow from the heat. And he, for his part, so many-sided in his interests—linguist, philosopher, military technician, voluptuary—was naturally more susceptible to the simplicity of a lowly-minded and pure-hearted girl than to the charm of one more able to share his intellectual distinctions. As she told him her story of a step-mother who made her life miserable,

the instinctive gallantry and protectiveness of his nature went out to meet her need. He gave her assurances of his goodwill and of his honourable intentions, placed her under the care of a suitable matron and proceeded to set up a home for her and himself. Love at first sight, it appeared, influenced them both. Nevertheless he made independent inquiries into her circumstances and conduct. He found full confirmation of her story. Then he determined to make her his wife. The sincerity of the man was as remarkable as the swiftness of his decisions. He opened his heart to her, confessing his faults, and assuring her of his intention, if she would marry him, to live a decent and chaste life. One condition only he attached to his proposal—that she should be a good mother to his child. “She answered this proposal,” he writes, “with caution and sedateness, she acknowledged an affection that she from her side felt towards me, but declared likewise that she could not resolve upon marriage till she had seen my child, and become acquainted with her, and I had asked and got the consent of her father and showed that my grief was real.”

Here was, indeed, some evidence of a beautiful feminine disposition. Her mind was pure; she was undazzled by the prospect of social advancement—and it was much for a little cotton-spinner to marry a captain of Horse whom generals and men of high rank regarded as highly proficient in military science. She would marry him, she said, if truly he repented of his sins. No wonder he did repent. Mere egotism surely would make a man repent in some sort when summoned thereto by lips so fair, so kindly, so chaste. “I left the company of those with whom I had till now been too much connected. . . . This gave me great trouble and much unpleasantness. Several common women who sought to keep up the acquaintance, were very troublesome by their rude visits to my new habitation, so that I was obliged to use compulsion to keep them away.”

He was ever quick in pride, but for the first time in life, love abated that quickness and the scholar-soldier humbled himself to take as his exemplar a simple working girl ten years his junior. “I took such a pleasure in the lower circle in which she moved that I was inclined immediately after marriage actually to stoop to the same conditions and to

exchange my manner of living for that of a common mechanic or journeyman."

Something beside love of his bride is evident here, something of the rebel against conventionality and social prestige which was in the air of Europe at that time. Rousseau and Voltaire, who both died in that very year when Vanderkemp met his future wife, had done much to democratise public opinion. The former especially had glorified common human nature even to a ridiculous extent, and his influence travelled far. Goethe in his *Autobiography* mentions that when he himself was a child in Frankfort, a well-to-do citizen of that place left directions in his will that "common working-men should carry him to his grave, early in the morning, in perfect silence, and without an attendant or follower." All the respectability of Frankfort observed in this lowly interment a significant break with customary pomp and class feeling. Goethe adds: "I bring forward this circumstance because it presents one of the earlier symptoms of that tendency to humility and equality which in the second half of the last century (i.e. the 18th) was manifested in so many ways, from above downwards, and broke out in such unlooked-for effects." Politically this feeling issued in the French Revolution, and men of feeble individuality were swept along by mere gregariousness into an entire renunciation of all that was traditional, alike in politics, in social usage and in religion. John Vanderkemp was of a spirit far too independent to conform, or to repudiate, according to fashion. He never became a republican. But something in his nature responded to that humanising influence which was flowing like a breath over all Europe, causing men of intellectual eminence to fraternise with the common people. Later in life one of his critics spoke of his "proud humility." There was a touch of this in his determination to marry beneath him.

Months passed by. His doings did not escape observation. He might be seen any day fetching water for his fiancée, as she girded herself in rough clothing to scrub the steps of the little house in which shortly she was to be established as his wife. People said he was going from bad to worse. It was of small importance what he might be doing in the purlieus of low dancing-halls at night. That was under the decent mantle

of darkness. But it was a very serious thing that a captain in a famous cavalry regiment, wearing his Highness' uniform, should, in broad daylight, carry pails of water for a common working girl and justify it on the plea that he was about to marry her! A distinguished general wrote to him a letter about the matter. After a little the Stadtholder himself, William V of Orange, as the head of the army, sent him a message through the officer commanding his regiment. "He did not intend," said his Highness, "to speak to me himself about my actions or to oppose me; that I knew that he esteemed me, and intended to advance me in military service as much as lay in his power. This I must know, but with all he could not do it as long as I did not think proper to make some alteration in my way of living." Vanderkemp's view of the matter, however, was that of the French King in *All's Well That Ends Well* :

From lowest place when virtuous things proceed,
The place is dignified by the doer's deed :
Where great additions swell, and virtue none,
It is a dropsied honour : good alone
Is good without a name.

He proceeded to the court and in an interview with the Prince asked to be allowed to resign his commission. Although, as we have seen, he had previously contemplated this step, when it came to the point he looked for some accommodation of the affair which would leave him master of the situation. But the head of the Dutch State was not to be flouted by a haughty young captain, however promising. "The Prince answered me with a certain visible coolness, that I needed not to remain longer in service than I pleased." The Duke of Brunswick endeavoured to mediate, but the pride which could bow before the love of woman was altogether stubborn in the presence of even the highest ranks of men. Vanderkemp adhered to his position and obtained his formal dismissal from the Army on 24th March, 1780.

In the eyes of Dutch society his relations with the little cotton-spinner were the culmination of a long-continued

wantonness. In reality they were the beginning of his reclamation from vice.

He proceeded, at once, to arrange for his marriage. There were, however, others beside the Prince who disapproved. Certain of his relatives—he does not say who—approached his bride with the offer of a considerable sum of money if she would break off the engagement. She declared in reply that she would rather be poor with him than rich without him. Then they urged upon Vanderkemp that in his marriage he should safeguard his little property from any possible claim she might have upon it. One can see again the spark of fire in his eyes as he spurned the suggestion. “How,” he writes, “could ever it be possible for me to think that she who was master of my heart should not be master of my property?”

So these two were married, Johannes Theodorus Van der Kemp to Christina Helena Frank, he thirty-three years of age and she twenty-three, and setting out on a journey of recreation, and for consultation upon their future life, crossed the sea to Harwich. With them went his little daughter, now seven years of age. All the day following the three travelled by post-chaise through the farm-lands and woods of Essex. It was early June. The meadows were luxuriant with marguerite and buttercup, sorrel and wild-thyme, while under the new green foliage of copse and forest the ground was blue with wild-hyacinth. If the road was rough it was beset with beauty. Bride and bridegroom might find some parable and hope for that future career they must now determine. The sun fell amongst the trees long before the lights of London were seen. Then the roar of the streets began about them. At last at ten-thirty the chaise ceased its rattling over cobbled ways, and somewhere in the Strand, near Temple Bar, to a house where once before he had visited he brought his wife and child and was “received and lodged with all affection.”

CHAPTER III

“O GOD OF PARMENIDES!”

JOHN VANDERKEMP took a couple of months for his honeymoon and for the planning of his future. Somewhat reluctantly, I imagine, but with practical good sense, he decided to resume the profession for which he had received at Leyden considerable but incomplete training. The hot youthful temper, which had led him to conclude that “rational medical science” was a pursuit “altogether incompatible with the character of a noble and generous man,” had naturally abated under the influence of a larger experience of life. Evidently, too, it had been stirred in him by dislike of certain lecturers. Britain offered him other opportunities. He decided for Edinburgh.

There was war on the high seas then, but with his usual intrepidity Vanderkemp chose to go by boat, partly, perhaps, because it would be cheaper, partly, because he wished to utilise the time for study. So with his wife and child he embarked at Gravesend on the *King George* and sailed with twenty-three other ships, under convoy of the *Chatham* and the *Camel* which together mustered ninety guns. It took eleven days to reach Leith.

He found suitable quarters a little out of the city itself, in the neighbourhood of Bristo Place. He was warned that smallpox was prevalent and that his little girl should be inoculated. As he himself in early life had nearly died from this malady, it is a little surprising he should have disregarded such advice. The child sickened and he almost lost her—a salutary warning to his persistent opinionativeness.

Previous knowledge of medicine and surgery enabled him to graduate as Doctor of Medicine after two years' study. The University was well served by distinguished professors, and he was happier here than in Leyden. Notwithstanding the

high quality of the medical faculty, his vigorous independence led him to certain conclusions respecting the circulation of the blood which were not in full accord with the official doctrine. As in his former student-life, so now, he was one to go his own way, a cocksure fellow, yielding no jot in the argument to mere personal authority, restlessly seeking for reality both in the realm of nature and in the sphere of philosophy. The questions of religion, too, were ever in the background of his inner life.

A few yards from his lodging lay the Meadows, a simple unadorned park, for which Edinburgh folk have always had a marked affection. Here in Vanderkemp's time learned men might often be seen walking singly, or in little groups, reading or in discussion. Lord Cockburn, then a very wide-awake little boy, remarks in the *Memorials of his Time* (Chapter I) that all the eminent professors and scholars of Edinburgh used the Meadows as a place for talk and meditation. Quite naturally their pupils would foregather elsewhere. To Vanderkemp solitude was essential. So even as his erudite teachers and their colleagues perambulated the park, walking circumspectly, both in person and in discussion, keeping to safe paths, moderation, and general agreement with the Kirk of Scotland, John Vanderkemp chose for his meditative retreat a wilder spot, betaking himself frequently to Arthur's Seat. From that noble height he could see the grey, compact city, smoke-garlanded, with her many church-spires and her dominating castle, all set in a wide sea of green fields, ramparted on the one side by the Pentland Hills and lapped on the other by the blue waters of the sea. When the air was clear after rain his eyes would move along the line of the Lomonds and the Ochils and the Grampians. So keen a strategist—for as we shall see military science continued to interest him—would not rest until he had learnt to identify all the distant peaks even as far as Ben Lawers towering 4,000 feet above Loch Tay. Arthur's Seat was and is a great place for mental exhilaration. And it was and is a place where as by an instinct, if they are alone, devout men will pray. Vanderkemp used it often thus and in after years he remembered a prayer he once offered there. Something it suggests of the

attitude one took who stood and prayed with himself in the Temple at Jerusalem, but something also of real desire for purity and truth. “O God of Parmenides,” he cried, “I thank Thee that I have attained to such exalted and accurate views of Thee! Let me proceed further and further herein that I may love Thee with my whole heart and hate sin: and grant that my wife and child and I may live together to the glory of Thy name.”

Now when we understand the significance of that address, “O God of Parmenides” we have the key to a good deal of Vanderkemp’s religious experience. It will be worth our while therefore to turn back for a moment to the fifth century B.C. and inquire of Parmenides concerning his God. Parmenides was a poet and lawgiver belonging to the Greek colony of Elea in Southern Italy. Fragments only of a single poem by him have come down to us. His response to the questions of Philosophy—the origin and meaning of the world—with all their religious implications, took a twofold form. There is, he declares, a philosophy of Truth and a philosophy of Opinion. In his statement of the first he unfolds the idea of Universal Being as “a single, uncreated, and imperishable whole, unmovable and changeless.”¹ Time is merely illusion, “because what is never was, and never will be, since it is *now*, all at once, one, coherent” (ἐπεὶ νῦν ἔστιν ὁμοῦ, παν, ἓν, συνεχές).

“He showed once for all,” says Professor Burnet, “that if you take the One seriously you are bound to deny everything else.”² Such a system of thought involves for some minds an Idealistic Pantheism, while others find in it the sanction of Materialism.

In the second part of his poem dealing with the Philosophy of Opinion there is a certain ambiguity. Here Parmenides gives an account of the world as including the existence of a female Divinity guiding all things from their centre. She is the mother of the Gods, the firstborn of whom is Eros, Love, and from her all mankind have come. Such an account of the Universe at first promises encouragement to those who believe in religion and in morality. The somewhat scornful way, how-

¹ Adam’s “*Religious Teachers of Greece*”, p. 243.

² “*Early Greek Philosophy*”, Second Edition, p. 204.

ever, in which Parmenides unfolds this "Philosophy of Opinion" indicated his own detachment from it.¹ There is obscurity in his language, but in view of those orthodox religious influences which a little later procured the death of Socrates on the charge of Atheism, it may well be that Parmenides was content to leave the matter thus. On the whole the attitude of mind disclosed in the poetic fragments ascribed to him is the sort of superiority we so often notice amongst philosophers in every age. On the one hand, there is set before the esoteric disciple a highly intellectual conception of the Universe, and, on the other hand, a patronising statement of popular religion as something it is well for the wise man to know, but which is merely the fruit of ever-varying sensations, the childish notions of unlearned minds. "Time," said one of the French philosophers in the eighteenth century, "time will make people distinguish what we thought from what we said." One remembers how Voltaire in his old-age rebuilt a Catholic chapel on his estate and took part in its re-opening ceremony, even sharing in the solemnity of an Easter Communion, whilst to his own friends he still spoke of the Catholic Church as *L'infâme*. In these mimetic doings Voltaire but a little emphasised the besetting sin of philosophers when face to face with powerfully established religious beliefs. Parmenides probably did the same. Vanderkemp, enthusiastic disciple of this Greek philosopher as he was, lived also under the influence of the eighteenth century *philosophes* of France whose breath was passing as a chill mist over Northern Europe, leading men to sneer at the beliefs and practices of a Church which yet commanded from some of them conventional gestures of respect. As we shall see, Vanderkemp maintained a sort of Parmenidean duplicity in regard to the creed of the Dutch Reformed Church.

His interest in the Greek philosopher led him to compose and publish a short Latin work upon the subject which unfortunately has disappeared from our public libraries. The pages of his autobiography relating to it are in many lines illegible, but it appears that his aim was to demonstrate upon

¹ A few scholars hold that he was here indicating views to which he inclined, but of which he had no certain assurance. This however, is not the prevailing judgment. cf Burnet *op. cit.*, p. 209; Adam *op. cit.*, pp. 241-3.

the basis of the Philosophy of Truth, as taught by Parmenides, the difference between God and finite beings as something far greater than mankind generally conceive. There is no essence found, he declares, which has anything in common with God. We do not share the nature of God, nor the power of God. If we did there would be God beside God. Moreover only on the ground of this uniqueness of Deity can we understand the doctrine of the creation of finite beings from nothing. “Such a creation,” he observes, “notwithstanding it requires infinite power in the Creator, shuts out the idea of an infinite resistance, which agreeably to the general opinion should meet God in the work of creation.”

This emphasis upon the overwhelmingness of God bears some likeness to the Evangelical doctrine of Professor Barth in our own day. But in the experience and belief of Vanderkemp at that stage of his life it had little significance for the doctrine of redemption. It served rather to increase the feeling of disdain with which he looked upon orthodox Christianity. True he was not far from the Kingdom of God when he could see so clearly the Divine sovereignty and sufficiency on the one hand, and the creaturehood of man on the other. But he was as one who chooses to view an Alpine landscape through blue spectacles; he sees truly the preponderating heights and the human dwellings so far beneath and is impressed with the contrast; yet the artificial medium he employs excludes every other difference and suffuses the whole picture with a depressing hue. From the standpoint of the Christian Religion, the test of whether or not we have attained to “exalted and accurate views” of God lies in the effect of those views in the promotion of beneficence. As yet Vanderkemp’s religious belief, though wide as the prospect from Arthur’s Seat, failed to read the open secret of the world—Love, that love which is strong enough to reveal in the Infinite the perfections of Goodness, Truth and Beauty. And just because in his out-looking upon the Universe Vanderkemp missed this, his life at this time had no more value for mankind than that of any other clever and respectable member of society. Clever he always had been, and respectable he had now become, but as yet he had attained no higher value.

CHAPTER IV

ANTI-SHIBBOLETH

VANDERKEMP obtained his medical degrees in 1782 and returned to Holland, settling as a physician and surgeon at Middleburg, where he enjoyed a good deal of fellowship with men interested in Science. He followed his medical vocation conscientiously, but without much zeal, confining himself to only twelve patients at a time.

He found Holland on the verge of Civil War. The Prince of Orange, William V, as Stadtholder, was pro-English in his sympathies. He had pronounced against the American Colonists in their war of independence. He had opposed the European combination against England in the "Armed Neutrality" business of 1780. Notwithstanding this, Holland had at last been brought into the war against England, suffering great losses in consequence. Whether events would have taken a very different course under a ruler who believed in the conflict he conducted may be uncertain, but William's open sympathy with the high-handed policy of England in European and American affairs created widespread discontent amongst his subjects and provoked the formation of a party in Holland known as "The Patriots", men whose democratic sympathies were being moulded under the influence of writers like Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau. The aim of the Patriots was to abolish "all privileges whether in Church or State, and to establish the principle of the sovereignty of the People."¹ As they became bolder they openly criticised the prerogatives attaching to the Stadtholder's office. The Dutch Towns had possessed local guards known as "Schuttery". These William had contrived to suppress. The Patriots began to revive them. Civil War drew nearer every day.

It was during this ominous time that Vanderkemp was

¹ "*History of Holland*" by George Edmundson (pp. 323 ff.).

invited by people in Middleburg, who knew of his previous military attainments, to take charge of a little company of volunteers. Now, though he had married a girl from the artisan class, and had himself quarrelled with the reigning powers, and was ever a rebel against conventionality, his political judgment was in favour of the then existing constitution. He was most decidedly not of the Patriot party. The request now made to him appealed to his love of military science, but before acceding to it he laid the matter before the Burgomaster and the Town Council. No objection being raised in that quarter, he accepted the charge on the strict understanding that politics should not be discussed in the meetings of the Company. After a little, however, difficulties arose, and Vanderkemp who had begun to drill and instruct his men according to his own military principles, found it needful to discontinue the work. He would do nothing which could be regarded as against the Prince. His scrupulous loyalty makes the incident now to be related all the more significant.

On a June afternoon in 1787, returning from a visit to one of his patients, he came upon a crowd of the Prince's supporters at the waterside, roughly handling a yachtsman who was suspected of intrigues in the Patriot interest. Remarking to a bystander that the man had better get on board his boat, Vanderkemp went his way. After a little, feeling uneasy about the poor fellow's safety he returned to the spot. The crowd had increased. He felt that he could do nothing. Then he became awkwardly involved in the press, and in endeavouring to escape found himself, as he says, "impeded by some big boys." "I shoved one of the boys back, while saying: 'Don't you see, boy, that you are in the way?'" Probably the "shove" was a trifle more vigorous than Vanderkemp realised. The boy fell, and instantly there rose a cry of: "Stand by, stand by, the *Kees*¹ beat us!" At once the mob turned upon him, willing to wound but afraid to strike. Vanderkemp was at all times a man of commanding presence and fiery eye. He knew, however, that he must get off quickly. "Surrounded and pursued by this mob I went forth over the bridge. Here I stood still and said: 'You think that

¹A nickname for the Patriots.

you do great honour to the Prince in misusing a Patriot, but your conduct is a disgrace to him. Besides that, I am no Patriot, but a Prince's man, as all that know me can witness.' Upon this I heard one shout: 'Let him cry *Oranje boven!* (Up with Orange!) and go away'." There was nothing, he said, he more fervently desired than *Oranje boven*, but he was not going to join in any such cry to please them. The excitement seemed to abate somewhat, and having held his ground against compulsion, Vanderkemp says he was about to give them satisfaction by raising their slogan, when his hat was rudely snatched from his head and decorated with an orange ribband. It was then returned to him to wear. Whereupon he took the ribband out and offered it back to the owner. No hand receiving it he let it fall to the ground, after he had declared that he did this in no disrespect to the Stadtholder.

The crowd howled: "Knock him down dead!" It was time to make another move on. His home was but a thousand paces away. As he went, the hands and fists of those around him buffeted him, and several times brought him to the ground. Every time he fell he caught at the man nearest and brought him down under himself, and so managed to get up and away. Near his house he faced the mob once more and addressed them, inviting six or eight of their leaders to enter with him that he might explain his position. This at last satisfied his tormentors. Once within his own doors, he easily gave the necessary assurances and was left in peace.

His troubles, however, were only beginning. Days of excitement and riot followed, in which the Orange mob had the upper hand and started plundering the houses of their opponents. Owing to his repeated public protests against these "detestable proceedings", as he bravely called them, he again fell under suspicion. There is no satisfying a mob except by joining it. His windows were broken. The house had to be protected by a Government guard of Swiss soldiers. Like Paul's opponents in Jerusalem, a number of men bound themselves by an oath not to rest until they had killed him. It seemed best to go into hiding. So at twilight one evening, in the street leading to the East India Company's wharf, people saw, or thought they saw, a tall, but bowed old woman in gown

and cloak, with a big straw hat, from under which gleamed two beady eyes deep-set above a long straight nose, thin lips and a rather big chin. With stooping knees—surely rheumatic—she crept along the street, stick in hand, “laughed at but not known”—such a shape, one imagines, as Sir John Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, when he stole out of Mistress Ford’s house in the gown of the fat woman of Brentford, “as big as he”, with her “thrum’d hat and her muffler too”. John Vanderkemp had adventures that evening, but finally came to the house of his friend Professor Krom, where, he relates: “I was received with all affection and was obliged to keep myself concealed no less than twenty days from the fury of the people.”

When the tumult subsided the Government required a public oath of fidelity from all the members of Vanderkemp’s Military Society. To this, so far as he himself was concerned, he objected. He had already taken the usual burgess-oath and that, he said, ought to be sufficient. He was not to be classed with suspicious persons. Indeed he demanded of the Government a counter declaration that his conduct had been unexceptionable. To this the authorities meekly acceded.

The entire incident remarkably discloses Vanderkemp’s personality. A believer in liberty and in the established constitution of his nation, he was a foe to all tyranny, including the tyranny of crowds even when they were clamouring on his own side. Loyal to the Government, he yet refused their requirement of a confirmatory oath; his word once given should be enough. He was, it may be granted, a tactless person and uncompromising, one who would never say “Shibboleth”, in order to escape from the fords of Jordan where men were being done to death. He had all the contempt of Coriolanus for crowds of violent people :

Let them pull all about mine ears ; present me
Death on the wheel, or at wild horses’ heels ;
Or pile ten hills on the Tarpeian rock,
That the precipitation might down stretch
Below the beam of sight, yet will I still
Be thus to them.

Such a man, an anti-tidal swimmer in human seas, is bound to raise enmities, and by the very edge of his zeal to provoke men to wrath, but :

The man is noble, and his fame folds in
This orb o' the earth.

CHAPTER V

CONVERSION

“**I** CAME into Zeeland,” says Vanderkemp, “as yet prejudiced in favour of the Christian Religion”. That is excellently put, for when a man but accepts our Religion as a matter of Church conformity his acceptance is a prejudice. It is good to be a Christian on any terms but in the long run with sincere men prejudices do not stand.

We would like to have more intimate knowledge of the little cotton-spinner Vanderkemp had married, for she was immediately connected with the purifying and redemption of his soul. He was a Church-member. She was not, but desired to be. In her preparation for membership she began to ask him questions about the Bible and Church Doctrine—questions he found it exceedingly difficult to face. He says that at first he sought to pacify her with answers which did not satisfy himself. Then, troubled in spirit, he began to examine more closely what was held by orthodox believers. He determined at all costs to be coherent in his own thinking and sincere in his professions. About that time his daughter too came under instruction for the same purpose. Her instructor, who was also a relative of his, suggested that her father was the proper person to give her guidance. Here was another trial for him. “I willingly executed my duty as father but I trembled at the idea that I, by informing her of my doubts and opinions, might perhaps impress on her tender mind a soul-destructive unbelief”. Like that noble-minded sceptic in the Psalms, he hesitated to lead another into his own bewilderments: *If I had said I will speak thus, behold I had dealt treacherously with the generation of thy children (Psalm 73, 15)*. The course he took anticipated somewhat modern methods of dealing with inherited formularies. They sat down together, father and daughter, she now some sixteen or seventeen years old,

and he a middle-aged man whose interior nature was swept and garnished but untenanted, and they studied the Christian Religion. He took a writing-book and divided it into four columns. In the first he placed those scripture-texts which contained, as was contended, the doctrines of the Reformed Church. In the second he entered some definitions of the terms used. The third was devoted to historical observations upon the doctrines. In the fourth the pupil was to write her own understanding of them. As the study proceeded, his thoughts concerning the person and character of Christ took on an increasingly sceptical complexion. "To preserve, or rather to pretend, a respect to the Lord Jesus Christ, I considered Him a man of deep penetration whose sentiments agreed best with mine and who had openly disputed the religious sentiments of the Jewish people, just as I perhaps might yet oppose those of the Christians". In this confession Vanderkemp has given us, perhaps unconsciously, a revelation of his own former intellectual arrogance. The man who could suggest such a parallel between himself and Jesus was too much of an egoist to see Divine realities. One who did not think of himself more highly than he ought to think would not inquire wherein Jesus agreed with him, but rather wherein he might be able to receive the teaching of Jesus.

As a Church-member of some years' standing, Vanderkemp now came to the table of the Lord, only that he might celebrate in a patronising way the martyrdom of a courageous reformer. "Respecting the doctrine of the Trinity, the Godhead of Christ, the Divinity of the Scriptures, etc.—these were absurd and rash expressions introduced by the modern Christians. In one word, Jesus had been a Deist as I myself, only He had adapted in a cautious and ingenious manner the style of His doctrine to the prejudices of His followers, as well as of His opponents. What the Christians maintained above this at present was of their own invention and not worthy of the approbation of a well-advised philosopher."

Scant as was the reverence thus paid to the Founder of the Christian Religion, it proved, as such a measure of reverence always must prove, impossible to maintain. Vanderkemp had too logical a mind to be a Unitarian, for the art of

cutting out of an ancient manuscript the verses one does not relish was not so much known in his day as it is in ours, and he could not shut his eyes to the fact that, taking any of the Gospel narratives as they stand, Jesus made assertions about Himself which were incompatible with normal humanity. Being an eighteenth century man he found difficulties where perhaps we should not, though ultimately his method and his sincerity would have certainly brought him to just the dilemma in which moderns so often stand. It was the claim of Jesus to work miracles which specially troubled Vanderkemp. Since Nature was uniform and miracles did not happen, he concluded finally that Jesus was a deceiver. And certainly if his premises were right his conclusion could not be denied.

Aghast at the situation now developing, he seemed to himself like one who dreams a drama in which he himself is central but inactive. His distress grew—distress more for his wife and child than for himself. Again and again he took up a pen to write his renunciation of Church-membership, but every time a warning voice whispered: “Are you sure? May you not be dragging your wife and innocent child to share with you an endless destruction?”—and he stayed his hand.

But he had no peace, for about this time his wife, despite her recent admission to the Church, became troubled concerning her “interest in Christ”. She asked his counsel. He could only recommend her to seek out a pious friend for her guide. Some shadow must have fallen then upon the beautiful relationship of these two, a sadness that he, who would have laid down his bodily life for her, could avail her nothing in the great concerns of the spirit. Then, as high-minded sceptics will do, because his unbelief seemed so hopeless, he set himself the more rigorously to accomplish the life of virtue; but the devil that is in us all resisted. He realised that he clung to sin. What the sin specifically was he does not relate. One can guess that in his dealings with others he often displayed a certain hauteur and impatience. But does a proud man love his pride? Vanderkemp says he loved his sins. His former immorality, though as it were retreating into the general hue of the dark years that were gone, may have left some lingering shadows, spoiling the quality of conjugal love. In any case the sense

of sin deepened. He cried to God for punishment. “ ‘ Lord, I said, the Christians ask Thee for nothing but grace and forgiveness. If Thou forgivest my sins through grace I am irretrievably ruined, and I shall only persevere more in sin and be nourished in it. O chastise me as long and as heavily as may be necessary to make sin unbearable to me.’ It pleased God to give me my foolish desire and I became exposed to many adversities. I could not, however, observe that it had any effect on me such as I had expected. I then prayed that the Lord would give me to know the particular sin which had brought evil upon me . . . but I could observe no connection.” Again he prayed : “ My religion shall in future consist herein that I will consider myself as a blind man who has lost his way and who dares not take one footstep backwards or forwards but stands still till someone comes by who takes him by the hand and leads him in the night I know not what is necessary for my deliverance, but if there is anything that is necessary for me to know, O make it known to me before it is too late. Of myself I shall seek nothing more, nor take anything more in hand. But with respect to the doctrine of the Christians who think themselves indebted to Christ for salvation and reverence Him as Thy Son and as God equal to Thee, never shall I be led astray to such blasphemy.” So he prayed in and about the year 1791, and repeatedly there sounded in his heart, as a cry of some suppressed and imprisoned self, the haunting question : “ When wilt Thou come to me ? ”

Nine years went by. The Middleburg climate did not suit him. Fever after fever swept over his system. At last he thought his end was near. Recovering, he decided to remove to Dordrecht and because he was now convinced of “ the vanity of phisick ” he abandoned medical practice for the pursuits of philosophy. So he came on the first of May 1791 to set up his home on the banks of that mighty river, one arm of which flows through Rotterdam, where as a boy he had dreamed of the great world and of the destinations of ships. The country around Dordrecht, and especially the river, pleased him. Summer grew resplendent. In his new home with re-established health, the days passed by in peaceful occupations and in loving intercourse with the two persons who were

dearer to him than any other being. Yet, as sharpest shadows fall on sunniest days, unaccountable presages of trouble came upon him. Once when saying good-bye to a friend, at whose house he had been visiting, he exclaimed: "I am now going home and have prepared myself to find my wife and child dead." All was well, however, when he reached home. Such misgivings are apt to visit loving souls thousands of times before the actual separation of death comes. No doubt Vanderkemp wrestled them down.

Monday, June 27th was a lovely day and in the afternoon the little family went for a sail upon the river. Presently the cool breeze dropped somewhat and it being time to turn they tacked. In the south-west the summer haze slowly concentrated into a black thunder-cloud. Rain fell. Then with a wild roar a whirlwind crashed the boat beneath the roughened waves. She turned upside down. Vanderkemp never saw his child alive again. Twice he dived into deep water and caught his wife and brought her to the surface, but finally he lost her. He lay exhausted, one hand gripping the keel of the boat, as it drifted in the foam and swell. When the storm passed he was seen and rescued.

He went home not only to mourn his loss but to think upon God's chastisements. The heaviest that was possible had now been applied to him. Was his heart softened to true repentance? He feared not. On the Sunday morning following he went to church. Worship began at a very early hour. It was the first Sunday in the month and the Table of the Lord was spread for the Holy Supper. Lonely, sorrow-laden and seeking for the peace of God he was arrested by the singing of the 42nd Psalm and especially by the 3rd verse: *My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, where is thy God?* It was his wife's favourite Psalm. She had sung it at home the night before she died. When the moment for the Supper came he hesitated, but finally took his place amongst the communicants. His motives were mixed; chiefly he was moved by love of his lost ones. Had they been living they would have been amongst the partakers. Perhaps, sitting where they would have sat, he might feel afresh their presence, and as for the ritual itself, should that deprive him of so

pathetic and so beautiful a bliss ? “ The Lord’s Supper in my eyes was too trifling a ceremony that I should suffer myself to be kept back by it.” The man who had prayed on Arthur’s Seat, “ O God of Parmenides,” might be pardoned for momentarily leaving the way of truth for the way of opinion, if along the lowlier but more human-beaten track he might perchance hear echoes of loving footsteps. “ Sitting down I imagined that I had my wife and daughter present, and that imagination was so strong that beside them I scarcely saw or heard anything.” He had passed through anguished days of conflict, but at last on this day had brought himself to accept what had happened as the will of God. So as he sat before the Holy Table he prayed : “ ‘ O my God now I will willingly be deprived of my wife and child because it is Thy will. I would give them over to Thee were it ever in my power to withhold them. Receive them from my hand. I resign them entirely to Thee.’ Upon this ejaculation I received in my heart the following answer : ‘ You must not trust them to God but to me.’ I cannot describe the feelings of my mind occasioned by this voice. The command sounded fearfully strange in my ears not to confide them in my God but to trust to another. On the other hand this command was accompanied by such unmistakable power that I could not oppose myself to it. I felt myself entirely under the power of the unknown speaker. And that God on whom I had hitherto trusted became so small and insignificant that He almost disappeared in the presence of this new object. Desirous to know with whom I had to do, I was directed to the person of Jesus of Nazareth and convinced, in what way I know not, that ’twas He that demanded this confidence from me. Scarcely was this become clear to me before I answered : ‘ O yes Lord I trust her to Thee perfectly.’ Then the question was proposed to me : ‘ Whether I was not satisfied that they were happy in His hand ? ’ Which being answered : ‘ Yes,’ it was continued with a reproach that if I had spoken sincerely herein I should not have neglected to commit myself likewise to the same hand. I felt with shame my neglect. I gave myself with all that I had entirely to Him whose power and love I now felt and I experienced that the only religion that pleaseth the Lord and satisfies the soul con-

sists of resting in Jesus. Here the negotiation seemed for a moment to cease, but I resumed and said in my heart: 'O my Jesus should I trust alone to Thee then I fear that I shall soon unfeelingly incline to the doctrine of the Christians which I have often examined and found to be a concatenation of absurdities and blasphemies.' But this objection was answered thus: 'Examine this once more and then you will judge otherwise of it, and I will instruct you. Now thou art convinced of the propriety of the imputation of Adam's transgressions to his posterity! I in the same manner save my people, but eat now this bread in remembrance of thy new Master.' At this moment the dish with the bread was presented to me, which agreeably to what was suggested in my heart I made use of.

"In this relation I by no means intend to signify that all these words that I have laid down were literally addressed to me but only that it is impossible to express more accurately in words the ideas which arose in my mind. This all took place in the short time between my taking my place at the table and my receiving the tokens of the Lord's Body."

The conversational form of this most remarkable experience may have the same kind of significance as the method of the *Imitation of Christ*, with which immortal classic Vanderkemp must have been familiar, especially as his own family-connection had been with Kempen where St. Thomas lived and wrote. But there was more here than the question of literary form. Of the ideas presented to his mind he subsequently observed that they seemed "rather an obscure whisper than an audible voice," a whisper perhaps like that *still, small voice*, or, *sound of gentle stillness* (as the Hebrew expresses it) which Elijah heard on the mountain at Horeb. There are moments in life when the soul, intensified by tremendous pains, becomes as sensitive to super-earthly suggestion as the microphone to the turning of manuscript leaves, or as Keats was when he heard upon the hill in the early morning,

A little noiseless noise among the leaves,
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves.

It needs not that Christ our Lord should *descend from heaven*

with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, to be heard in that sorrow-tense atmosphere where every string is pitched to the highest. Even the obscure whisper startles, convinces, masters. It is its very resemblance to silence which proves it Divine. All the Eternities and Immensities, if one may borrow Carlyle's language, are articulate with authority in that whisper as it falls far down the abysses of a man's interior life.

Of course it is possible to regard this voice which claimed Vanderkemp's trust and obedience as the liberation of a long-suppressed religious feeling, the utterance of his child-soul once nurtured by parental piety. But, in view of the change in all the range of his sympathies which began at that very hour and which developed into a real transformation of his nature from self-centredness to Christ-centredness, the conviction grows upon us that, along whatever psychical pathways our Lord moved, He did on that day really draw near to this man in whose heart had so often sounded the pathetic cry, *O when wilt Thou come unto me?* Further, those words which so amazingly contradicted the tenor of Vanderkemp's habitual thinking through long years of scepticism—"You must not trust them to God but to me"—manifest the same assumption of mediatorial grace as repeatedly confronts us in the acknowledged utterances of Jesus. They do not in effect exceed the tremendous claim asserted in *S. Matthew* II, 25-30, that access to the Father is dependent upon the will of the Son. We can see, too, that our Lord's insistence upon the transfer of trust from God to Himself was the considered treatment of one particular soul, astray in mist-covered and pathless wilds of thought, whose God was not in truth the God of the Christian but the God of Parmenides.

I conclude that John Vanderkemp was apprehended of Christ in the same sense as that in which St. Paul experienced His hand. And even somewhat as the Apostle, after the vision of Christ's great light, passed into darkness for three days, Vanderkemp's audition of the Lord was followed by five hours of stupor, in which he neither saw, nor felt, nor thought anything, but moved as a somnambulist. When the cloud passed away his active introspective mind turned to a critical ex-

amination of his experience. At first he was sceptical, but acting upon the command laid upon him to re-examine the Christian Religion he began an inquiry which led him at last to faith. The various stages of his spiritual development can be summarised in a few words. He saw that sinners were renewed by a Holy Redeemer and brought to virtue without punishment, that all was of grace, that faith in Jesus justifies. "These truths . . . were not made known to me by way of inspiration but they flowed forth each of them from the preceding ones by way of inference in a most inconceivably easy way. . . . I was so overwhelmed, transported and satisfied . . . that I could not wait to get to the end of the chain but sprang up and for the assistance of my memory began to note down those that were the most strange. Now I saw plainly that I never before had had a right conception of the Religion of Jesus. I cannot forbear observing . . . the wonderful wisdom by which God had led my thought in this examination, in drawing them away from all the doctrinal compositions of Christians. For if at that time . . . I had made use of the Netherlands confession of faith, I should then have stumbled at the second article, that in which Holy Scripture is considered the foundation of doctrine ; for my thoughts respecting the fabulousness of Scripture were at this time still the same."

What he had now received was, he said, not by inspiration but by inference. It appears that all through his years of unbelief he had never doubted that article of the reformed faith which affirms the inheritance of sin from Adam. And the voice at the Supper had assured him that Christ's redemption came to men in the same way. It was Paul's idea—*As through one trespass the judgement came unto all men to condemnation ; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life (Romans 5, 18)*. And from this Vanderkemp built up for himself step by step, through inference, the fabric of the evangelical creed. It is interesting to note that just as St. John believed in the resurrection of Jesus from what he saw of the empty tomb, not yet knowing the scriptures that these things must so be, so Vanderkemp's faith in Christ as Redeemer and Lord was reached without

previous faith in the authority of Scripture. "But the next morning my eye fell upon the Bible and I thought, If this book, as the Christians insist, is written by Divine inspiration then the doctrines contained in it must agree with the Gospel which has been discovered by me, of the truth and divinity of which I am now fully assured, and it is worthy that I should make proof of it. I was at first kept back through a secret fear that that proof might turn out so much to the disadvantage of the Holy Scriptures that it might oblige me in this case to declare myself against the unanimous opinions of the Christians. But considering that sooner or later I must come to it, I undertook this examination after I had prayed for my Lord's teaching and enlightening influence. . . . My attention fell upon Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* and I read the first five Chapters and discovered an agreement between his doctrines and mine, which rejoiced me astonishingly. With not less joy I observed that the manner in which the doctrine of the Gospel was proposed incomprehensively exceeded my newly-obtained conceptions, in richness of matter, completeness, accuracy of expression and in the selected order of treatment. . . . And now I was a judge of the Scripture and received it with hearty thanksgiving as a gift the worth of which was to me inestimable as from the hand of its Author. The truth of the Gospel of Christ shone with rich and clear lustre in my eyes and thereby I . . . supposed everyone would be convinced of it likewise as soon as I had only informed them of what the Lord Jesus Christ had taught me." At once, therefore, he wrote to an intimate friend who had shared his previous views and told him of his new experience, inviting him to take a similar step in the way of faith. Twice he underlined these words: "Jesus is worthy of unlimited confidence". This, he declared, "is the substance of the doctrine of Jesus". The truth of this, he went on, depends upon the qualities of Jesus. "Only by faith in Him can we become virtuous and so happy."

It was a good letter but his friend's response was disappointing. "I perceived my mistake and folly, how that I had been self-conceited, looking upon and glorying in what I had received as if I had not received it. I had taken upon myself in my own strength that which can only be obtained through

the power of Jesus, and I learned to my shame that I was not able to transfer my convictions to others, but that the same teacher who had instructed me was needed again and again to give light and truth to the soul."

"I was not able to transfer my conviction to others"—there spoke the heir of Greek philosophers, of Parmenides, of Plato and of Aristotle too. "The same teacher who had instructed me was needed by them"—there spoke the disciple of Him who said : *He calleth His own sheep by name and leadeth them out.*

CHAPTER VI

“ O INVITE ME AMONG THY SWINE ”

THE immediate further experience of John Vanderkemp after his conversion is related in his Journal with a directness and beauty which bring his writing into favourable comparison with St. Augustine's *Confessions* or with Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*. The exquisite simplicity of his inward life is reflected in the greater charm of this part of the manuscript, and one cannot do better than select its more important passages, leaving them to make their own impression.

“ The Lord treated me with an incomprehensible indulgence and tenderness. He comforted me by His embraces in the grief which I suffered by the loss of my friends. I knew neither care nor trouble. If I desired communication with Him He immediately suffered Himself to be found by me. I was not troubled by any conscience of sins. . . . My daily desire was only to be taken from earth to Him, and I expected He would satisfy this desire in a short time.

“ Although I did not doubt then of the love of the Father towards me, of which indeed I was convinced in a wonderful manner by *John* 14, 23-26, I had no conscious communication with Him and was much more averse to this than desirous of it. I did not take it in my mind ever to offer prayer to Him, and I felt an unconquerable aversion to address God in the name of Father. I was satisfied with the access which I had to the Lord Jesus and it seems that it did not please Him as yet to introduce me to the Father.

“ I had little to do with my former sins, nor was I much concerned about the way in which they might be atoned for. I thought it was sufficient if my Lord knew it. I knew Him as my conqueror and all powerful King. I wandered in His wonderful love and enjoyed His instruction as my prophet, but

of His transactions as High priest I had no idea—no idea of sanctification, nor of the progress of the work of grace in the heart, of the wrestlings of unbelief, nor of the painfulness of sin in the flesh, much less of the assaults of Satan ; but it was not long before it pleased the Lord to shew me my defects in this and gradually to shew me my misconceptions.

“ By a closer connection with the Lord’s people I perceived that the greater part of them had been led in a different manner by Him than it pleased Him to lead me in the beginning, so that my original corruption had been more shewed to me in Adam than in myself, as likewise in the same way I saw my righteousness in Christ more than in myself, while I heard that they were more directed to the internal wickedness of their hearts evident from their own actions. . . . I began to desire that He would make me to know the wickedness of my former heart and the effects which must still be actually remaining in me independently of the nature of Adam. I said ‘ I desire only to weep for my sins and I wish to love Thee and gratefully to live for Thee, for the redemption wherewith Thou hast blessed me ! But how can I justly mourn, how can I love Thee, when I scarcely know from what Thou hast redeemed me ? I suppose indeed that this must have been a very great danger, but if Thou dost not let me see anything more of it than Thou has discovered unto me as yet, then will my gratitude be but very cool ’.”

He prayed thus for some days without any answer. “ Then one afternoon there appeared before my eyes a scene of wickedness and also of ruin, which became by degrees more and more abominable,” until the picture was unbearable. He begged to be set free from the consequences of his “ folly ” in offering such a prayer. But the obsession continued and the sense of his righteousness in Jesus vanished. He threw himself at last upon the mercy of Jesus now hidden from him. As soon as he did this, letting go everything that was within his reach, a most happy calmness came.

“ Oftentimes I discovered the power of grace ; oftentimes I tasted the love of Jesus ; and the enjoyment of it was so sweet and comforting that I cannot describe it, but it was not to be compared with that which proceeded from the mixture, if I

may so express myself, of a justly proportioned sense of sin and mercy.

“About this time I began to observe that at every time when the Lord had particularly manifested Himself to my soul, immediately afterwards I behaved myself in an uncommonly bad manner to Him, running into all manner of baseness and unfaithfulness.” Prayer against this seemed in vain. “In my dejected state under this bitter experience, I began to pray to Him, that He would rather keep back the sensible manifestations of His love than give me over to the wickedness of my heart. ‘I have sufficiently experienced Thy love, said I, that I am able to assure myself of the same, and it is preferable to me that Thou wouldest conceal Thy face from me, until the day of Thy appearance in glory, when I shall see it again, than that Thou shouldest embitter Thy comforts by permitting me continually and painfully to stumble : hold me only in secret.’ I had not very often uttered this wish before the Lord changed His way with me and since that time concealed Himself more from me. I did not, it is true, experience such grief from backslidings, but whether they were less heavy than formerly I dared not determine. My conscience perhaps was less tender. On the other hand, the loss of the sight of the Lord’s face grieved me. Not knowing what might be best for me, I prayed that the Lord would deal with me according to His love and wisdom and not according to my foolish desires.”

He then had a wonderful experience of Providence when seeking a new temporary residence. “I was very accidentally led as by the hand to a family consisting of a man, his wife and daughter. The woman of the house readily consented to my taking my residence there. This resolution was heard by the husband and daughter with astonishment, as she had often expressed her resolution not to take strangers into her house : but she declared that I was the same person to whom she had been directed in a dream to receive into her house. In that same household, which bore the name of Falck, dwelt God with His sufficient grace, in a very visible manner. By a wonderful dispensation of Providence, having been suddenly deprived of all expectations of possessing earthly riches, and by a series of disappointments, they had learned by experience to be

satisfied with God in Christ, and, living daily from His hand, they had no want. Sharing in the enjoyment and affection of this delightful and happy household I could not at the expiration of winter, which appeared to me as one day, resolve to leave it, but put off my intended departure to Wageningen for another year. Before this year ended I had experienced so much of the Lord's supreme direction in all my undertakings . . . that without His express will I should not have dared to change my place of residence even if I had wished.

“It happened on a certain Saturday that . . . I was walking out of the town and hastened to pass by a friend who was walking before me, in order not to be spoken to, or detained, by him. In stepping past him I observed this resolution in my heart: ‘I must keep the sacrament to-morrow.’ I recognised that it was the Lord's voice and answered ‘I know Lord, but what do you mean by this?’ Upon this there followed: ‘Yes, for you 'tis an easy matter; you can easily without any preparation keep sacrament five and twenty times in one and the same day, but this is not so with Me. Conceive how many thousands will be to-morrow at the Table and I must previously consider what I must give to everyone and how I shall act to everyone, according to his circumstances.’ And after a short interval: ‘What do you think I have intended for you?’ Upon this I said: ‘Lord, that I do not know, but if to-morrow I am assured that the tokens which I shall receive are pledges of Thy love to me then I shall be doubly satisfied.’ To this I received no other answer than: ‘And what will you bring to-morrow to give me?’ I did not understand the purpose of this question, but answered in my ignorance: ‘Give to Thee Lord? not a farthing, no not the scraping of a fingernail. You know that I have not sought Thee. You fell upon me, as a highway robber comes behind and unexpectedly knocks down a traveller on his way, and made Yourself master of me, and when I was in Thy might demanded all from me, my soul, body, all that I had. Even the coat I wear upon my back I have given to Thee, and can You still ask me what I will give Thee, as if I would have kept anything back?’ And after a short interval I added: ‘I have nothing else of my own—that You know very well—than a

heart full of abominations. If that will please Thee, that I should be able to give Thee.' Unexpectedly the Lord took me at my word, and said: 'This is just what I wish. Give it Me to-morrow.' . . . The next morning I heard Mr. B—— describe the quality of the people of God from *John* 10 under the emblem of sheep. He viewed them on the most advantageous side, and represented them as meek, pure, clean, useful, tractable, readily following the Lord etc. Never did a sermon disgust me more than this, for I saw in myself the very opposite of all this, so that I exclaimed: 'Lord, if truly the sheep who presently are to sit down at Thy Table are so pure, obedient, useful, I scarcely dare, who from the head to the feet stink from the filth of sins, to sit down with them. O invite me then among Thy swine.'

"I was not, however, in the least discouraged by these considerations. While sitting at the table Mr. B—— said: 'I will not speak anything over the Table lest I should hinder any person in his still meditations.' Only then my thoughts were fixed upon what had taken place yesterday. 'You have, said I, O Lord, yesterday filled my heart with abominations, and without asking, here you have it now.' Hereupon I was instantly returned an answer: 'Now they are Mine, abominations and sins! Take care that you in future don't speak again of your abominations and sins.' "

"At this moment there sprang up a new light in my heart. I saw my former unbelief, neglect, aversion to the way of reconciliation, blindness, inconstancy, unfaithfulness, unrighteousness, etc. but likewise found my heart cleaned from these defects, which Jesus had now taken to Himself, so declaring me to be His."

CHAPTER VII

SERVICE OF HIS PRINCE

THE changes which Christian faith introduces into personality are well described as redemptive. They do not destroy the natural bent of the man. They liberate it. Cleansing from sin, which is the first and last function of faith, brings into relief our natural qualities, just as the removal of dirt from an old oil-painting reveals the original work of art.

Few men can ever have experienced a more thorough spiritual revolution than John Vanderkemp. He could always look back with thanksgiving to that wonderful Communion Service on Sunday, July 3rd, 1791 as the occasion when he was set free and his cleansing begun. But he was still John Vanderkemp—soldier, physician and scholar—keen of eye, alert in body, specially interested in military science and in a hundred other things as well.

Now on January 21st, 1793 Louis XVI of France died on the scaffold and shortly after there began the period in the French Revolution known as "The Terror". Belgium was already under the heel of Revolutionary France. In Holland the Stadtholder, William V of Orange, as we have already seen, was no friend to democracy. His sympathies were with aristocratic and monarchical England. His rule over the nation, weakened by a continual increase of republican sympathies that flowed like a confluence of hidden springs beneath a flimsy earth-crust, invited attack. In the spring of that year France declared war upon Holland on account of what she called the Stadtholder's "slavish bondage to the courts of St. James and Berlin."

The tide of war rolled up against Willenstad, a town near to Holland's Diep, one of the estuaries of the Maas—not twenty miles away (as the crow flies) from Vanderkemp's home in

Dordrecht. Here was an exciting stimulant to his soldierly mind. One notices in his Journal a swift transition from the beautiful, if somewhat introspective, piety of its immediately preceding pages to the keen operations of a military mind. He left his devout house-companions and his books and made off for Willenstad, the fortress of which was governed by a Mr. Van Boetrelaar, an old army acquaintance. As his boat crossed the broad estuary, the French were firing red-hot twelve-pounders into the town. He landed and made his way along the streets, one of which was aflame from end to end. In another thoroughfare building after building was being battered to bits. Still he marched on. Flung to the ground by the impact of a cannon ball upon the wall just above his head he got up un-hurt and went his way, saw the Commander, his friend, and after a little returned home. On his way back to Dordrecht he inspected the defence arrangements against the French advance, and came to the conclusion that, if the enemy did advance, it would need a miracle "to cause them to fail in their undertaking."

A few months later he was formally requested to take the field as an army doctor and he reluctantly agreed. It is likely that his reluctance was due to his preference for combatant service. Had his old commission as captain of Dragoons been tendered him he would have gone like a shot. As it was he was ready to serve and help his Prince all he could, but not with much enthusiasm.

About this time being in a church at Dubbeldam and thinking about his call, his eye fell upon the clerk's Book of Psalms lying open at the 91st, a Scripture he did not remember ever having read before. It came to him now as a voice from Heaven offering him encouragement. "I was convinced," he says, "that all that was good in that Psalm would be fulfilled to me, as indeed I have experienced, except the reward of the wicked, as mentioned in the 8th verse. I know not as yet to have seen this." The Psalm it will be remembered, (*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High*) not only promises to the man of piety protection amidst dangers, but long life. Vanderkemp died at the age of sixty-four, which in the 18th century would be considered quite in accordance with the

psalmist's expectation. I conclude therefore from this reference to his experience of the fulfilment of the Psalm that the Journal was written towards the end of his life. Now, that when he felt himself to be an old man he could say he had not as then "seen the reward of the wicked" opens to us a glimpse into a very fiery spirit, for he must have seen repeatedly some of the penalties of iniquity. Never apparently however, had he seen enough to satisfy his blazing hatred of wrong. He himself had been a great sinner, for what we call "immorality" is always a desecration of the personality of another as well as a dishonouring of oneself. But it may be questioned whether in the esteem of Christ such sin is as damnable as deliberate cruelty, or persistent selfishness, or hypocrisy. And John Vanderkemp was one who by nature, and increasingly by grace, had affinity with the hatreds as well as with the tender mercies of Jesus Christ. He was one with his Lord in this that he never needed, as so many modern Christians do, that exhortation of the Psalmist "Ye that love the Lord hate evil." As an old man his eyes could blaze with anger. In his middle life when he went up and down the war-zone of Holland, we can well understand that a heat of spirit in him would sometimes scorch the contemptible and the unjust. One rather squalid controversy he relates, in which accusations against him came before the highest authorities, but he appears to have been acquitted on all counts. He was a man who was sure to make enemies, a man of intrepidity rather than of tact.

He shared the suffering of the soldiers in a very literal way, being attacked by fever. For the second time in his Journal he scornfully alludes to the "vanity of physick", and relates that in his illness he would take none. It might have been better for him if he had, for he went down to the very gates of the grave, his poor ulcerated body swarming with vermin due to the unsanitary conditions of the hospital. Roman Catholic priests visited him but he assured them of his readiness to die and that their offices were not required. "I was to these gentlemen an inconceivable phenomenon." A stroke of apoplexy followed his recovery from fever, but did not prevent him from resuming a military journey the next day.

Throughout these months of incessant labours, hardships

and horrors, the upholding power of his Lord was within him, never for a moment to be distrusted. Very rarely did he find support in Christian fellowship. Once, however, he had a delightful experience. In the great hospital at Ghent of which he had charge, there were cellars occasionally used as wards. One day Vanderkemp went exploring through these dismal and chilly regions. He came upon a row of bedsteads, over one of which was some writing. Lifting up his lantern he read in charcoal letters upon the whitewashed wall lines thus translated :

My Jesus reigns as Sovereign King,
Within this dreary place,
Here has he caused my lips to sing,
And filled my heart with grace.

He himself had been feeling depressed by the ungodliness of Ghent, and the crude verse he now read came to him as the known voice of a friend. "Dear brother (thought I) who wrote this, you found yourself in the same situation as I am : if I may be favoured in the same privilege as this, of which you here bear witness, I shall not have to complain of the want of religious company." He went up from that dark cellar to visit his patients with a new zeal for Christ. He tended them in spirit as well as in body. Everybody loved and revered him. He organised Christian worship, taking care that the prayers should be acceptable to all parties, Roman Catholics included. Later we find him acting as a church elder and assisting in the administration of the Holy Supper. At another time he is busy getting a place in readiness for Roman Catholic worship.

The war ended in the capture of Amsterdam by the French, the flight of the Stadtholder to England and the inauguration of a new republican constitution. Vanderkemp's services being no longer required in the army, he was offered a new and more advantageous post but rejected this, not approving of the political order. So once more he came home to his Christian friends, to his books and to his meditations upon the Christian Revelation, awaiting what next thing might be given him to do. He did not have long to wait.

CHAPTER VIII

DEDICATION

THERE is a poem by O. W. Holmes entitled *The Chambered Nautilus* in which is described the growth of a genus of mollusc which year by year closes up some part of its shell and makes for itself a new and higher room. Therefrom the poet reads a message for himself :

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll !
Leave thy low-vaulted past !
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea.

The image of the Chambered Nautilus constantly reverts to one's mind in reading the story of John Vanderkemp. Even the engraved portrait of him which lies before me as I write confirms the suggestion. Above those deep-set and rather uncompromising eyes, the forehead rises like a huge dome built up stage upon stage.

If new pursuits of our mind necessarily involve new growths of our brain, one could almost assume at a glance from the building of that brow that here was one who added speech to speech, and science to science, in a continual ascension of the spirit. He had studied both the science of arms and remote philosophies of Greece. He had mastered the anatomy of man's body and framed theories of his own concerning the circulation of the blood. He had experimented in chemistry. He had acquired a working knowledge of many languages, ancient and modern. He had ventured into the then almost-untraversed regions of Oriental literature. And as he thus

built up new mansions for his soul at length there was reached the stage when, as one may come up from lower rooms into a room of nobler design, he entered finally upon a work by which beyond any other in his varied career he is remembered amongst those famous men it is our honour to praise.

During the spring and summer months of 1795 when his war-services were ending, meetings and religious services were being held in London which culminated in the formation of the Missionary Society, known now to all the Christian world as the London Missionary Society. Despite the many privations and hardships of long-continued wars, a wonderful religious and philanthropic movement was stirring the Christian people of England. A new spirit of sacrifice, a new faith, a new hope went thrilling through the Body of Christ. Even to-day that movement inspires us whenever we read again the glowing words that were spoken and written by its first agents. Enthusiasm, which was rather disrelished by 18th century people, filled these missionary promoters, not undiscerningly. "The prayers of so many," wrote one of them to Vanderkemp, "will not be disesteemed on high, though much ignorance and false fire may attend us". It was not remarkable therefore that the thrill of the Body of Christ in England should touch Vanderkemp as he sat in his quiet study at Dordrecht on the Maas, reading and waiting for his Lord's next command. He sent for the publications of the Society's first proceedings. As he read them there came upon him the desire to be its servant, but fearful lest he should make any wrong step he waited, as he quaintly says, "for the wink of my Lord." After a while the "wink" came, directing him to communicate with the new Society.

"I fell on my knees and cried: 'Here I am, Lord Jesus. Thou knowest I have no will of my own, since I gave myself up unto Thee, to be spent in Thy service, according to Thy pleasure. Prevent me only from doing anything in this great work in a casual and self-sufficient spirit, and lead me in the right way, if there be yet any way of wickedness in me'." It is one of the characteristics of Vanderkemp's inner life as related by himself that, more even than Augustine or Bunyan, and rather as George Fox and John Woolman or in ancient

times Jeremiah, he not only prayed but received answers which fell into words as definite as the answers of a human friend. It had been so in his conversion. It was the same now in his dedication. He wrote to the society's secretary : " I felt my heart immediately directed to communicate to you the ideas which presented themselves to my mind."

He hesitated only as to the kind of service he could render. Should he stay in Holland and organise there a Missionary Society on the lines of the London Society, or should he proceed at once to a heathen land ?

The Directors lost no time in making inquiries concerning him at Rotterdam. They were fully satisfied, although one point in the correspondence perhaps suggests a hint as to that tendency to arrogance which, as we have seen, was inherent in his disposition. In their reply to him they recommend him to think seriously of the deceitfulness of the human heart, and of the danger he was in of being influenced by pride and selfish motives, of the need in Missionary service for meekness, patience, self-control, courage, and faith. He answers with that fresh greenness of humility which oftentimes is conspicuous in natures originally proud when they come into reshaping and recolouring under the Redeemer's hands : " With respect to pride and selfishness, it is true those vices are deeply rooted in the corrupt frame of my heart, and are ready to defile every thought and action." But he thinks they have some guarantee to trust him in this matter, since while he has a desire to go, he is conscious also of an aversion to take any step without an express Divine command. " When on the 5th April, I asked the Lord Jesus what he would have me to do, I was led to write to the Society and now, I am trusting that you will be enabled by Him, to discern, and reveal to me the will of the Lord."

That is a deeply instructive position. It is not enough for a man to hear the Divine summons to serve. This may suffice for a prophet, and prophecy is always an individual thing, sporadic, *ad-hoc*, the function of the free-lance rather than of the legionary. A Christian minister belongs to another category. A call of God he must have, but that call must be counter-signed by the Church, the community of believers of

whom he is one. No man ever had a stronger independence of spirit than Vanderkemp, yet he revered the Society of Christ and would take no important step in Christian service without the sanction of that Society.

The correspondence culminated in the suggestion that he should go to London for the determination of his future career. Accordingly he went. There, at Crown Court, in a Presbyterian Church, he was ordained minister of the Church of Scotland, after due examination of his sentiments and principles as a Christian believer. The Presbyterian character of his ministry had no particular significance. The Churches were never closer to one another than in those glad and fervent days of Missionary beginnings. Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Congregationalist worshipped not so much according to denominational distinctions as according to the fundamental unity of Christ's saving Evangel. To-day, perhaps, in the Church of Scotland, such an ordination as Vanderkemp's would not be permitted, for it savoured very closely of a Congregational method, but such variations were nothing accounted then. The emphasis of these Missionary Fathers was everywhere upon the things which are central in the Christian message. And with this Vanderkemp was in the heartiest agreement. In a letter to the directors (26th July, 1797) he speaks of the impropriety of preaching the Gospel to the heathen upon the usual schismatic plan by societies that adhere closely to their own tenets, instead of proclaiming the simple Gospel of peace.

Vanderkemp relates that the Church authorities at Crown Court found his beliefs sufficiently agreeing with their doctrine, notwithstanding his declaration that he could not bind himself to any of the "human Church-creeds", which had been read to him. In the dawn of his changed life he had averred his faith in Christ Himself rather than in any system of Christian doctrine. Now in his ordination he laid aside such elaborations as the Westminster Confession, the three Catholic Creeds, the Thirty-nine Articles, and just stood up to the same grand central position—an undefined, that is to say, a boundless faith in the historic and living Saviour as all-sufficient for his personal salvation and for his support in the service of the Kingdom.

Christ ! I am Christ's ! and let the name suffice you,
Ay, for me too He greatly hath sufficed :
Lo with no winning words I would entice you,
Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ.

This in effect was his declaration on that memorable day when he was set apart for the Christian ministry ; and his word did suffice our Fathers. There are some other lines by F. W. H. Myers, *The Genesis of a Missionary*, which most aptly sum up the religious spirit in which this ordinand proceeded to his venture :

Stung with the sharp pang of that evil day,
Too short occasion did all life afford,
If anywise at last he should repay
A white soul to the Lord.

Thenceforth to labour, strong in stedfast zeal
And faithful furtherance of a mighty plan,
In noble language labour to reveal
His Maker unto man :

“ I with great violence have entered in,
Storm ye with force the golden gates of heaven :
Oh freed from agony ! oh safe from sin !
I also am forgiven ! ”

Therefore on many a coast his cry was heard,
On many ears that earnest warning broke,
Yea, with his utterance he strangely stirred
The hearts of many folk :

Fast chained he kept them in divine surprise,
Deep things of God he wisely spake and well ;
Strange glory on his face, but in his eyes
The memory of Hell.

After some discussion it seemed truly what Vanderkemp called “ a wink of Providence ”, that he, a Dutchman, with

good knowledge of English and understanding of English ways should be leader of a mission to the Cape, where Dutch and English were confronted with the problem of heathendom at their very doors. At the same time the alternative project of founding a Missionary Society in the Netherlands was possible as a preliminary enterprise which he might initiate and leave others to develop.

Accordingly, provided with an open letter from the London Missionary Society to Christian people in Holland, Vanderkemp returned for a brief visit to that country. His mode of return was characteristic. Though fifty years of age he was physically as adventurous as when once in the days of his youth, though not being able to swim, he undertook to dive from one side of a boat on the river and come up on the other side, a prank which nearly cost him his life. He had now embarked on a ship lying in the Thames, but it was war-time and there was some delay in setting sail. As he stood on the deck, fuming over lost hours, a Dutch fisher-boat swung down the stream. He read the name, hailed her captain and found she was bound for the Maas. A moment or two later, with such of his belongings as were essential, he had leaped on to her deck and was off to Holland, without any message to the people with whom he had lodged, or to those eminent and dignified persons, the directors of the London Missionary Society. He simply disappeared from London and, though inquiries were anxiously set on foot, no one knew for some time what had become of him.

Meanwhile the little craft cleared the mouth of the Thames and ran into a gale. The sun set upon a wild sea. Black clouds gathered. A howling wind blew out every lamp on deck. The shipmen were at their wits' end. If they were tempted to think their adventurous passenger the cause of the storm, as the mariners bound for Tarshish did in the case of Jonah, the event proved in one respect that he was unlike the cynical prophet. Like Jonah he did go below, but not to sleep. He undertook to guide the helmsman from the little rickety cabin in which a lamp could maintain some sort of waving flame. Compass in hand he lay in bed and shouted directions up through the skylight. The boat reeled under the blows of huge cresters. The wind shrilled in her rigging and the blocks banged. In a

sudden sickening lapse of a vast comber the amateur master-mariner was nearly flung from his bed, the cabin partition smashing under the weight of a barrel which had broken loose from the rest of the cargo. So the night wore on. Then the dawn slowly lighted the white wave-tops and the Dutch coast line. To gain the Maas, however, was out of the question and the skipper decided for Flushing.

But now a new and difficult situation arose. There was war between England and Holland and no boat from the Thames could enter a Dutch port. The captain foreseeing this had falsified his papers, and they showed the ship as having come, not from London, but from Hamburg. Thus prepared, when he left England he had had no anxiety about his getting through the examination in Holland. But he grew uneasy when he thought of his singular passenger—this tall, lean, commanding person who had sprung on board his ship so lightly and had proved so resourceful in the storm, a man whose presence fascinated and magnetised one, and from whom like the stream of a fragrance from an aromatic shrub came the effluence of a spirit—a moral power which created restlessness of conscience and fear in telling convenient lies. He broached the matter to his passenger and to the crew, told them they should say if questioned—from Hamburg they came and nowhere else. Vanderkemp maintained an inscrutable silence but within himself prayed for deliverance. Certainly he would tell no lie, but he would tell no incriminating truth.

The ship like a tired creature crept up to the quay and moored. Then the examination began. The visiting official looked the papers through, and handing them back said: "Your papers are in order, you come from Hamburg and thus you can unhindered pursue your voyage." Then to the astonishment of everybody the Captain told the truth, and against the first good-natured disregard of the official, reiterated that, despite his papers, as a matter of fact he had sailed from London. The Customs-man shrugged his shoulders. The skipper went to gaol for sake of a conscience newly working towards moral manhood. And Vanderkemp went his way through the cities of Holland—through Middleburg and Dordrecht and Rotterdam and Delft and the Hague, and

Leyden and Haarlem and Amsterdam—calling the faithful everywhere to a new proclamation of the Gospel through which the consciences of many might be delivered from the dominion of evil.

So a Dutch Missionary Society was formed and Vanderkemp translated for it the London Society's trumpet-call. A volunteer for his own expedition was found in one John Kicherer, who was to prove a worthy colleague.

After these things he left Holland for the last time and came to London again, not without adventures, his ship narrowly escaping capture by a privateer. In London a suggestion arose that perhaps after all it would be better for him to join the second Tahiti expedition which was about to set out in the *Duff*. The party was made up of men and women of various occupations, several being agriculturalists and artisans.

Vanderkemp declined to throw in his lot with them, expecting nothing good from such a numerous mission consisting of so many persons of different tempers, objects and sentiments—a decision which showed that amid all the enthusiasm of the time, here was one man at least who, while he shared that enthusiasm to the full, yet possessed a clear and critical intellect unlikely to be deflected in judgment by mere gregariousness.

Notwithstanding this decision, however, he did not undervalue any mechanical skill which might be consecrated to missionary service, and apparently it was during the autumn of this year that he acquired in Hoxton the art of brickmaking, to which he refers in one of his later letters. Clearly he anticipated the need for facing all the drudgery of a pioneer mission.

CHAPTER IX

ANOTHER "WINK OF PROVIDENCE"

I WILL counsel thee with mine eye upon thee—was the promise realised in a Psalmist's experience (*Psalm 32, 8*).

From the day of his conversion to the end John Vanderkemp was one who ever lived, "As ever in his great Task-Master's eye," and it is not surprising that in the reverent familiarity of a faith like Jeremiah's he should speak of direction under a figure that to us is rather crude. That "wink of Providence" which designed him for the Anglo-Dutch Colony at the Cape directed his journeying thither. The reference raises questions as to the sort of guidance a modern missionary would recognise as from God. For this "wink" was the suggestion of the British Government that Vanderkemp and his fellow missionaries—John Kicherer, John Edmonds and William Edwards—should travel in the convict ship *Hillsborough*, in which 300 of England's criminal population were bound—literally bound—for Australia, *via* the Cape.

Eager for service wherever the need seemed most urgent, the missionaries gladly welcomed this opportunity of ministering to a shipload of ruffians. So they made ready their personal effects and collected from friends a goodly number of Bibles and other books useful for distribution. There followed a breakfast-party in London made up of the Society's directors, the *Duff* missionaries, with Vanderkemp and his companions, and after breakfast these all received the Lord's Supper together, as was often done in Apostolic days when the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ followed simply and naturally the love-feast of Christian fellowship. Then the missionaries travelled by post-chaise and coach to Portsmouth where the *Hillsborough* and the *Duff*, with their convoying frigate, the *Amphion*, awaited them.

It was on December 23rd, 1798, a few months after the Battle of the Nile had established English sea-mastery, that the *Amphion* led her protégés down the Solent. In Portsmouth the shops and homes of the people were bright with Christmas preparations. Folk gathered to their firesides, and drawing their window-curtains shut themselves in comfort away from all sight and sound of the sea and its wintry storms. Then, as now, Christian men kept the holy season of the Advent of Christ with soft home-pleasures and joys of the table, and mutual kindnesses. But not much seasonal cheer can have been tasted on board the *Hillsborough*, as she climbed and slithered down the vast Atlantic waves, through scanty daylight and the long badly-lighted hours of darkness. Three hundred miserable and violent men were confined to her lowest deck below the water-line. They had little to do but talk and plot, spit and swear, and throw any handy missiles at the rats, whenever in the gloom they caught sight of shining eyes amongst the rafters and ship's ribs.

Condemned as they were to such a hideous incarceration, it is little wonder that even before the ship had left Portsmouth a naval officer venturing amongst them in search of a deserter was roughly handled and escaped alive with difficulty, or that from the same cause a second attempt to carry out this purpose with a naval detachment had to be abandoned.

The convicts had sympathisers, too, amongst the crew, who at different times during the voyage supplied them with knives, files and saws. Several intrigues were discovered—now it was to poison all the ship's officers, and then, more desperately, to burn the ship and escape in the boats. Some managed to file off their fetters and once a general mutiny threatened. When this became known the Captain put armed guards at strategic points and prepared to get in the first blow. A hideous conflict, in which scores of the convicts inevitably would have been shot down, was only averted by the mediation of Vanderkemp. He volunteered to go down among the mutineers and bring them to reason. By this time he had become known to them as a real friend, for with his companions he had visited the hold daily, conversing, teaching some to read, conducting services and attending the sick. He was listened to now with

respect. Those who had broken their chains consented to be refettered and the trouble died away.

Sanitary conditions on such a ship were always bad and fever broke out. Men lay shivering under old sacks and rags, crying out in a medley of blasphemy and home-craving. Vanderkemp had his hands full, ministering both as a doctor and as a clergyman. Day and night followed each other in a dreadful monotony of squalid routine. As the ship slowly passed out of the temperate zone into the torrid, the heat and stench below deck were insupportable to all but followers of the Son of Man. In the glare of mid-day, or under the light of a copper moon at night, the dead were lowered into the deep. Thirty-six of the convicts died during the voyage to Cape Town, and fifteen others lay past hope of recovery. And every day the missionaries pleaded, and taught, and prayed, with the dying and the living. Once there came a three-days storm that brought five feet of water into the hold. For a time the ship was in danger of foundering. She lost sight of the *Duff*, and naturally the missionaries feared both for themselves and their friends. But they betook themselves to prayer, and Vanderkemp pleading for their friends asked: "Lord, Thou hast given them in great danger a little ship! O give them great faith." When the next day dawned the wind had fallen, and close beside the *Hillsborough* the *Duff* rode up and down the long smooth green water-ridges—a sight which "filled our hearts with joy and our mouths with praise."

Fourteen weeks passed and on March 31st, 1799 the *Hillsborough* anchored in Table Bay. The voyage with all its privations had been a time of preparation for service. When not engaged amongst the convicts the missionaries studied together under Vanderkemp's leadership, and every Sunday held services for the ship's company.

A man of fifty lives in the past as well as in the present. If he travels into new lands, yet with all that is brought to him in fresh impressions, ever present to his thought will be the years gone by, with their varied incidents. This must have been true of Vanderkemp. Glimpses of the home of his childhood, memories of Leyden, the face and form of his beloved wife Christina and of his child—not hers, but another's

(too bitterly remembered)—hospitals on the field of battle and that in Ghent with its dismal cellars, the quiet home at Dordrecht, sicknesses almost mortal from which he had been raised, the Lord's Table—more than once a trysting-place with God—kindly English faces in London and Portsmouth that smiled upon him, prayers of ordination and of valediction, and then this grim and often terrible grappling with the degraded and downtrodden men England had spumed from her mouth—all this savoured of a heavenly food, a cup of the Lord both bitter and sweet, a meat and drink that men who serve Him not know not of. After this manner did John Vanderkemp, Knight of Christ, gird himself for the great quest appointed him in Africa.

CHAPTER X

ENVISAGEMENT

IF Vanderkemp's experience with the *Hillsborough* convicts had been grim and of a kind to test his missionary powers, the conditions attaching to his future work in Africa were to prove yet more exacting. The public mind in the Colony, both ecclesiastical and lay, was on the whole sub-Christian. Vanderkemp was prepared to some extent for conflict with colonial opinion. During the period of his residence at Middleburg he had received an invitation from the Dutch East India Company to proceed to the Cape as a military commander and to raise troops there, presumably for the defence of the Colony against England. This he had declined. "The aversion which I had always had from the object and manner of acting of that body would not permit me to give myself as an instrument to support its measures."

When indeed he actually went to the Cape it was as a missionary of an English society and when the Colony had been wrested from Holland by English forces. The rule of the Dutch Company therefore no longer existed, but the Dutch themselves remained. If Vanderkemp had entertained any idea that the substitution of English political domination for Dutch would remove from his path those obstacles he had formerly discerned, he was speedily disillusioned. Such changes as were immediately introduced by the new government had no particular influence upon the life of the natives. It should be said at once that, throughout the period covered by Dr. Vanderkemp's work in South Africa, the trouble between the Colonists and the black people did not arise from any distinctive quality, or defect, in Dutch mentality. It was human nature that was at fault. The modern descendant of these early Colonists has to recognise that neither Englishman nor Dutchman was free from blame. If amongst the many

instances of cruelty practised upon the natives Dutch names rather than English predominate, it must be remembered that the Colonists in Vanderkemp's time were chiefly of Dutch extraction. On the other hand, the successive English governments appear to have been less ready to punish those guilty of atrocities than were their Dutch predecessors.

To understand the position Vanderkemp had to face we must consider briefly the history and principles of the Colonists.

The Colony had begun in a small *depôt*, or factory, which the Dutch Company founded at Table Bay in 1652 as a place of call for their Oriental trade. As this grew, emigrants arrived from Europe—Dutch, French Huguenots, West Germans, English. The French element naturally brought a strong religious spirit, and probably all who came professed themselves Christians in a loose sense of the term. There was, however, a root of bitterness in such Christianity. The Christian Religion always suffers from the fact that it has too many nominal adherents.

If we go back to the beginnings of Christianity in any of the so-called Christian countries of Europe, we commonly find that whole peoples were baptised at one time when their chiefs and kings were baptised, irrespective of individual faith. Thus the first conversion of East Anglia in the seventh century followed the conversion and baptism of Earpwald its king, and when Earpwald died the people relapsed into idolatry. Such relapses always blunt religious susceptibility. So it is that the conversion of kings has often proved the perversion of their subjects. The quest for truth, spiritual discernment, faith, surrender to a high vocation—these alone can make a man a Christian. The popular impression, however, is that a man may be called a Christian if now and again he goes to Church, or has been baptised in his infancy, or is willing to recite a creed.

Amongst the sad pages in South African history—and they are many—one repeatedly finds the term “Christian” used, sometimes by the natives, sometimes by responsible white men, for those whose actions were the actions of anti-Christ. Yet it is possible that, in some dull uncomprehending sense, people whose lives were in no way governed by the teaching of

the New Testament at times sincerely regarded themselves as entitled to whatever religious dignity invests the Christian name. The historical student can see quite easily the process whereby Christianity has thus often become a corruption and a blasphemy. The first Apostles addressed themselves to individuals and particularly to those who were poor and of no account to princes. Later the method of evangelisation was to secure the goodwill of despotic chiefs and tribal kings without whose aid perhaps no appeal to their followers would have been possible. Hence has followed the mechanisation of conversion, its ritual character, its perfunctoriness and lack of radical moral movement in the depths of the soul. Hence, too, arise the sub-Christians who bring upon the Church the shame of flagrant inconsistency.

The South African Colonists of Vanderkemp's day regarded themselves as those who had settled for life all questions of religious loyalty, if, indeed, such questions had ever occurred to their minds. They had a State-Church to which they resorted for the rare occasions of marriages, baptisms and burials, and sometimes on ordinary Sundays too. Did not that suffice to show that of course they were Christians? If St. Paul had come amongst them, perhaps he would have inquired of them as he did of the twelve inept disciples at Ephesus: *Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?* and, in that case, they would have had to confess: *Nay we did not so much as hear whether there is a Holy Ghost*; and this is just the point which separates the artificial Christian from the living one.

It should be said here that most certainly real and devoted Christians were to be found, not only in the few churches of the towns, but sometimes also in isolated farms. They were a minority whose spirit helped to exercise some kind of moral restraint upon the acquisitive temper of their fellow countrymen. Had it not been so, the work of Christian missions would have been more terribly slow than it was. But the trouble which missionaries in South Africa have generally experienced has proceeded not only from the nature of the heathen material they had to deal with, but from the compromised Christianity of many professedly religious people, and from the open hatred

of those who regard the native as the white man's natural servant.

At the first, things had been more honourable to the Christian name. In the seventeenth century the general relations of white and black were kindly and just, and there was a real desire to bring the natives into the Church. Slaves were sometimes led to become Christians on confession of faith, and when they were baptised they were manumitted. There was even an intermarrying of white and black Christians. But the unbaptised slaves were many and their marriages amongst themselves were not recognised by law. Thus womanhood was cheapened. "Three fourths of the children born to slave women were of illegitimate birth."¹ This naturally tended to the moral debasement of the coloured people and moreover must have jeopardised the sincerity of those for whom the Gospel had any attraction.

In course of time the rule that the baptism of slaves should be accompanied by liberation was felt to be rather a strain upon the generosity of Christian masters—a stiff price to pay for evangelical zeal. So the practice gradually fell into disuse, and we read that in 1792 a congregation at Stellenbosch sought the advice of the Government as to whether it was "permissible to baptise slaves on the distinct understanding their emancipation need not necessarily follow." The reply was: "Yes." From the time when this costliness in the work of religious teaching was evaded, sincere and earnest Christian living naturally declined.

Meanwhile outside the regular congregations the bulk of the Colonists were more concerned with material interests than with any attempt to Christianise black men, against whom in the prosecution of these interests, they often came into disastrous conflict.

European ideas of land-ownership were foreign to the uncivilised tribes who roamed the country in the vicinity of Cape Town. These people were hunters and breeders of cattle and they moved their encampments according to changes in the seasons and the varying venue of their quarry. Vast stretches of land were waterless and springs naturally were

¹Prof. Du Plessis, "*A History of Christian Missions in South Africa*," p. 37.

landmarks regulating the limits of tribal movements. An unwritten but real communal ownership over roughly defined regions obtained here and there, but anything like individual proprietorship was foreign to the aboriginal mind. In this contrariety of the idea of possession lay the seed of conflict between European and African. The former gradually pushing his domain further inland began to stake out personal claims which clashed with the hunting habits of the natives. He might most truly declare that when he began to occupy some ground where bubbled a useful stream it was uninhabited territory, and a few weeks later find natives roaming about it as upon their own domain which in moral right it might be. The resulting dispute generally ended in bloodshed. The situation illustrates the line in a French poem of the eighteenth century : " Pitiless property, mother of all the crimes which inundate the world."¹

The prevailing attitude of the tribes to the white people at first was friendly, but repeated experience of the latter's cupidity and cruelty naturally provoked the full force of a resentment which stopped at no barbarity in reprisal.

The Government at Cape Town was not in the position to exercise much control over its subjects when they began to trek from the coast. Men became a law unto themselves. This was the more unfortunate because they drifted too far from the centres of population to preserve the amenities of civilised life. Their houses were rudely constructed, often having only earth floors spread over with dried cattle dung. Like their native neighbours they preferred cattle-raising to arable work ; it was easier. From these and kindred causes they degenerated in character. There is ample testimony that the up-country farmer of the late eighteenth century was too often a lazy man, leading a very animal type of existence, content if he had enough coffee, brandy, meat and ammunition, to do without the refinements of town life.² He was generally ignorant of all books except the Bible and a hymn book ; it was a big and difficult adventure to spell out a few passages in these.

¹Morelly's "*Basiliade*".

²"*A Modern History for South Africans.*" Prof. Walker. (Cape Town, 1926), pp. 81-2.

Men of this type had little hesitation in meeting the depredations by natives with the same weapons they used in pursuit of big game. Human beings, when they were black, were classifiable with baboons and other animal marauders. And yet these same human beings had affections, loyalties, and often some craftsmanship and skill, and, to borrow from Shylock's defence of Jews, were susceptible to the same joys and hurt by the same pains as men whose skin was white.

Vanderkemp and his fellow missionaries, as will be seen later, did not hesitate to bring definite accusations against certain Colonists in respect to their treatment of coloured people. In some instances their accusations, founded only upon native testimony, broke down but substantially they were true. It is not, however, by the missionaries that the most serious charges have been made. The testimony of Professor Walker¹ and of other writers who cannot be suspected of partiality to missions is very grave. Most serious of all perhaps is the account given by the late George W. Stow, F.G.S., F.R.G.S., in his posthumous work *The Native Races of South Africa* (edited by Dr. G. M. Theal, London, 1905). This considerable and valuable book, the outcome of thirty-six years' residence in South Africa, contains a far more serious arraignment of the white man in that country than has appeared from any missionary source. It may be admitted that it lacks the spirit of impartiality. It is grossly, and even ludicrously unfair, to missionary enterprise.² But though sober people must feel that some discount has to be made from the author's indictment, in view of his own lack of judicial temper, the facts he states and authenticates speak for themselves. He writes :

“ The Bushmen were pursued and destroyed with a relent-

¹*Op. cit.* pp. 85-7.

²The author in one place refers to the London Missionary Society as “ a Society whose well-meaning but frequently, through ignorance and inexperience, misguided interference has entailed an unmitigated increase of evil, in almost every portion of the globe where they have inter-meddled ”. The Society can afford to ignore such wholesale condemnation. Dislike of Christian Missions amounts to a phobia in some writers. It proceeds generally either from racial pride, or from what is called “ scientific rationalism ”. In the present instance the latter is probably the root of the trouble. Happily a careful student in his analysis of the real values of a writer can usually isolate and allow for the influence of this mental malady.

less and almost savage ferocity, clan after clan was annihilated, the men were shot down without mercy, and the surviving women and children were dragged into a state worse than slavery. Sometimes they were destroyed in their caves, and no survivors were left ; all, men, women and children, perished in a heap ; and men, nominally Christians, boasted, as if they had been engaged in some meritorious act, of the active part they had taken in these scenes of slaughter ” (p. 156).

For thirty years, he declares, “ a war of extermination had waged with vindictive violence, sweeping over the fated Bushman territory in a pitiless storm of blood ” (p. 174).

Sometimes, it is true, the Colonist’s desire for land found satisfaction through peaceful methods. Occasionally a business transaction was substituted for a military. Stow mentions one in which a number of Bushmen were induced to sell their rights over 2,250,000 acres for one horse and seventy fat-tailed sheep valued in those days at some 4/6 each.¹ The document duly read over to these wholly uneducated men, doubtless drawn up in the jargon of a white lawyer’s technique at Cape Town, was duly signed with a cross—fit symbol of the lot in which the Bushman was condemned to live.

I do not desire to darken the reader’s mind with a narrative of all the horrors attendant upon the expansion of Cape Colony. He who would read the story in detail should go through the 12th chapter of Mr. Stow’s book—*The Struggle of the Bushmen for Existence*—remembering that this only treats one phase of the subject. The whole is a melancholy complication of crimes. Mr. Stow’s sympathies were enlisted on the side of the Bushmen. There were other black races in South Africa—Hottentot, Kaffir, Bantu, and multitudes of half breeds. Often enough these were at war one with another. Hottentots spoke of the Bushmen as “ the murderers ”, and when they could, hunted them down as remorselessly as did the Boer farmer. And the Bushmen, slim, agile, far-sighted, poisoned his arrows and shot at any whom he feared or desired to plunder. It had not always been so. If white men had only lived according to the law of Christ, black men would have proved tractable neighbours, their quarrels amongst them-

¹Stow p. 395.

selves would have been mitigated, and the whole country would have enjoyed a prosperity which has never yet been its portion.

Should Governmental confirmation of the main position described in this chapter be required it may be found in the Report of the Commission of Enquiry to the House of Commons, published by the Colonial Office in June 1830 :

“The efforts of the Government to afford protection to them (i.e. natives) and to guard against the consequences of fraudulent and unequal bargains, appear to have been disregarded by the settlers, who at length resorted to force and violence, and proceeded in parties to possess themselves of the cattle of the defenceless natives. . . . The official records make frequent mention of the expeditions that were undertaken to repress them, and which seem to have proceeded on one occasion with the merciless intention of extirpating the whole race. Although this purpose was not effected, yet the expulsion of the Bushmen from the lands to which they resorted for pasturage for their cattle, their confinement to those which, from the want of water, are frequently fatal to animal life, and the frequent and indiscriminate slaughter which took place whenever the armed inhabitants of the colony attacked the kraals and the villages in which they were collected, must have greatly reduced their numbers.”

CHAPTER XI

FORWARD INTO DARKNESS

THE *Hillsborough* ran out her anchor at Cape Town with a joyous splash, on the afternoon of March 31st, 1799. Before the travellers' view, stretched the jagged heights which gird Mount Table, the flat summit itself lying some 3,500 feet above the sea. At its foot Cape Town, green-belted and white, promised quiet and spacious lodgings for sea-weary men. The whole prospect wrought in the hearts of the missionaries something of the same exhilaration which led the first European settlers in this part to name the peninsula "the Cape of Good Hope".

It was the tranquil autumn season before the North-West gales began, and the town looked its pleasantest. Vanderkemp landed and wandered through its streets and oak-shaded avenues, finding abundant refreshment after his long voyage in the mellow beauty of gardens surrounding comfortable-looking villas. Streams of water rippled by the side of the principal thoroughfares. Men in broad-brimmed hats moved about their business in the shops and canteens with an air of leisure and of kindly mutual interest. At night, in their homes, gay parties of well-dressed people gathered for dance and music, for Cape Town had the name of "Little Paris". There were a few goodly buildings which arrested a traveller's attention—the stately watch-house (later converted into municipal offices) a commodious church with clock tower and steeple, the East India Company's imposing block of offices, and the extensive castle with parade-ground which were the headquarters of the garrison.

Vanderkemp lost no time in waiting upon the Governor, General Dundas, and the Fiscal (i.e., Attorney-General) V. Rynveldt, who was at the head of the Civil Service. By them he was favourably received. The ministers of the Dutch

Reformed Church, the official church of the Colony, were also sympathetic with the Doctor's mission. For some time before his arrival at the Cape there had been a steady growth of missionary sentiment amongst the citizens, partly occasioned by the success of the Moravian mission at Bavian's Kloof (Kloof of the baboons) happily renamed in 1806 Genadendal (Vale of grace). The work here had been begun many years before but had been suspended on account of the hostility of the Reformed Church. In 1792 it was recommenced by three new missionaries, and through their devoted labours it had so prospered that a new church to seat 1,000 people was being erected at the time of Vanderkemp's mission. Bavian's Kloof thus was beginning to be renowned, and the hostility of the Boer farmers, no less than the jealousy of ecclesiastics at Cape Town, was giving way to a better feeling. The mission was, indeed, like a lofty beacon-fire summoning Christian men far and near to a spiritual, instead of a carnal, warfare against Heathendom.

So with his usual energy, five days after his arrival at the Cape, Vanderkemp set off to visit this place, a hundred miles away, and to see for himself what was being done and how his own efforts could be directed in harmony therewith. Some days he spent with the Moravians in "much affection", learning of their plans and unfolding his own. His heart was set upon a mission to Kafirs beyond the Eastern border of the Colony, a long way from Bavian's Kloof. Thus no question arose of any conflict between the two missions, and after ten days of consultation the doctor returned from his journey.

Day by day there were conversations and discussions amongst the sympathetic in Cape Town. The London Missionary Society's letter to the congregations there was translated into Dutch and read from the pulpits. The issue was the formation, on the 22nd April, of "The South African Society for promoting the spread of Christ's Kingdom." Funds flowed in. Much enthusiasm was created.

The official letters of Vanderkemp to the directors in London naturally reflect the glow of these proceedings. In his autobiography, however, written at a later date, there are some shadows as well as lights in the picture. Possibly these

are due partly to the troubles of later years, but it is curious to find that the ministers of Cape Town and its surrounding villages, although giving the new movement their blessing, considered that they had reasons for refusing to be members of the proposed society.

In his letter of May 13th to the directors, Vanderkemp gives an interesting narrative of evangelistic work he and Kicherer had begun amongst the slaves at Cape Town, who constituted more than half its population of 6,000 persons. Four times a week they met the slaves and preached to them, and in addition there were two hours set apart for private conversation. He writes: "Many are evidently being baptised with the Holy Ghost and with fire, though the customs and rules of this country do not allow them to be baptised with water." That, perhaps, in an official letter, was sufficiently scathing in its reflection upon the Christianity of Cape Town. In his autobiography he is less restrained. He speaks of the slaves as "those unfortunate creatures, who according to the wicked rules of this wretched country are sold as beasts and separated from their children by monsters who call themselves Christians." He proceeds: "All without any distinction engage in this abominable traffic, without any remorse. Ecclesiastics and others of the children of God are guilty of it. Here we may see what power habit and education have in searing the conscience and bringing the new man into subjection to sin. Marriage among these unfortunate people is not only unknown, but even declared to be unlawful by those European barbarians who rule over this land; that thus they might with less shame tear from each other those whom God has joined together. A female slave may give her heart to whom she pleases, but her owner (or rather her robber) compels her, and that not infrequently by the most cruel treatment, to yield her person to any whom he approves of, and whom he changes as often as he thinks that by so doing he might increase the misery of the wretched woman. . . . I do not, however, mean to insinuate that all the slave-holders are equally cruel in this abominable traffic, yet the best amongst them deprive the slaves of the slightest vestige of freedom."

This passage affords the reader some important glimpses into

the social situation at the Cape, the kind of Christianity which obtained there, and into the quality of Vanderkemp's spirit. A judicial scrutiny of each fiery sentence leads to the opinion that here was a man capable of great wrath against inhumanity, an intrepid defender of human rights, but also one who, in the heat of his sympathies with the oppressed, could easily be led into overstatement of the wrongs actually done, and into understatement of mitigating circumstances. The coming of bitter controversy between himself and the Colonists looms already upon the otherwise pleasant appearance of their relations with him. On the whole, the slow progress which the South African mission was doomed to make must largely be ascribed to the unworthy elements in what purported to be civilised and even Christian society. As against these elements we see a handful of men, imbued with St. Paul's conception of the unity of the human race and of the salvability of savages as well as of the civilised, attempting to demonstrate Gospel truth on human material hard enough to change. The task was stupendous, and it was made the more difficult by onlookers who, tendering a lip homage to Christianity, sought repeatedly to bind the missionaries' hands.

The time had come for a definite formulation of the work. Something must now be said of Vanderkemp's three colleagues. The most hopeful was John Kicherer, who had studied at Utrecht university and was twenty-four years of age. William Edwards, an Englishman, came from another class and apparently possessed more zeal than knowledge. Dr. Haweis, one of the most distinguished of the London directors, writing to Vanderkemp (Feb. 22nd, 1799) requests him to "exhort our Brother Edwards to improve himself in spelling, in which he is very defective. He should use some spelling book, and when he writes a letter if he would correct himself by referring for every word to the book, and write the correction under the word he has misspelt, he would not fail soon to improve." The third, John Edmonds, betrayed a yet more serious deficiency. He had little staying power, and, as we shall see, very early retired from his undertaking.

The existence of conspicuous defect, whether intellectual or moral, in any member of a group of colleagues who have to face

a hazardous adventure, will usually split the group. Some personal disagreement seems to have developed at Cape Town. In a letter of May 13th, 1799, Vanderkemp reports that he had found it "highly necessary in order to prevent any root of bitterness from springing up to suspend his directorship of the mission and to establish a perfect equality" among its members. Old Dr. Haweis—old he began to feel with dental troubles and as he says an immediate prospect of the grinders becoming few—yet retained an animated disposition and in his reply he commented upon the situation thus: "Your letter glances at a spirit of insubordination than which nothing can be more fatal. The manner in which you express yourself may be a wise determination in your present circumstances; but if my Brethren are of my opinion we shall disapprove your submitting to resign your authority, and as our representative you ought to be considered by them. I shall earnestly recommend that you be invested with power to dismiss any man who shall be refractory, stating always your reasons to us, and remembering the patience and gentleness of Jesus Christ. But subordination must be maintained. Nothing will be more fatal to our missions than the want of a Head, and the firmness of authority," etc., etc. He was writing just before a directors' meeting. Evidently he went off in some heat, perhaps raised a degree or two by dental exasperation, to emphasise, as old men will, the necessity for law and order. Before he laid down the pen he added: "I will leave a few lines till I return from the Committee." The few lines were added and are these: "The letters are laid before the Society. I have nothing particularly to add, ever yours, T. Haweis." And then, perhaps remembering how St. Paul closed his castigation of the Corinthians, he subjoins: "Present my kind love to the Brethren." A rather sweet old man was Dr. Haweis, sweetness and fire being almost as much akin as Matthew Arnold's "sweetness and light." One guesses what happened at the Committee meeting from a letter which the Society's Treasurer, Mr. Hardcastle, wrote to Vanderkemp five days later. He applauded Vanderkemp's "discreet forbearance in preferring the interests of peace and the continuance of goodwill to personal considerations. But" he adds, "if your Brethren do not pay a very peculiar respect

to your advice they will very much mistake their own duty, and very much disappoint our expectations."

The issue of the discussions at Cape Town was a division of effort, a fundamental mistake in so small a party. Kicherer and Edwards undertook to respond to an appeal made by certain chieftains of the Bushmen and bravely tackled perhaps the most difficult task which any Christian missionary in Africa has ever handled. Vanderkemp's views lay in a different direction. Just before his final departure from Holland, in conversation with the retired Dutch Governor of the Cape, he had gathered information about the Kafir tribes beyond the frontiers of the Colony, and had learnt that they were "very cruel and intractable". This, of course, rendered a mission to them most desirable. The same thing might be said of the Bushmen, only the Kafirs were a more important race. The natural energy of Vanderkemp's disposition responded to a great challenge, and moreover his high valuation of strategy, engendered by military experience and much reading, impelled his mind towards big undertakings and to the more important fields of action.

He determined to proceed to Kafirland; beyond that, in the far distance, he visualised Madagascar, just as St. Paul looked on from land to land and dreamed of Spain. Accordingly it was settled that Vanderkemp and Edmonds should set out for the Great Fish River, at that time the Eastern boundary of the Colony, and endeavour to establish relations with Gaika, the king of the Kafirs.

They started on May 29th, 1799, accompanied by Bruntjie, a famous Hottentot elephant-hunter, whom Vanderkemp had secured from Bavians Kloof as a guide and interpreter; with him went his two sons and other natives as servants. Their departure from Cape Town resembled in miniature the departure of Israel from Babylon, as foreshown in the Second part of *Isaiah*. They were to prepare the way of the Lord, and to be a light to the Gentiles. Vanderkemp himself hoped that from this enterprise the evangelisation of the whole continent would follow. Christ's dominion should be *from the River*—in this case not the Euphrates but the Great Fish River—to the ends of the earth. Around them were glad

Christian faces lit with the joy of the same expectation. Conspicuous amongst their well-wishers, crowds of slaves came bringing baskets of fruit and thrusting upon them coloured handkerchiefs, as tokens of gratitude for the gracious ministry of the previous weeks. The waggons were loaded up, the oxen yoked and the joyous procession went out from Cape Town amid a general friendliness which, however, was far from being a discerning sympathy.

The earlier part of their journey through the Colony was marked by that abundant hospitality which is the pleasantest feature of life in a new country, where the perils of loneliness draw men together, whenever possible, for mutual cheer. Everywhere, we read, they received the welcome of angels. Their stopping-places were the farmhouses which lay at great distances from one another, the homes usually of large families and many native dependents. Seldom did any Christian preacher find his way to these miniature centres of human life, and now Vanderkemp and Edmonds found everywhere an eager throng of listeners to whom the Gospel of Christ came really as news. A little later, John Campbell, a director of the Society, writing of his visit to the missions in South Africa, related that when conducting worship amongst some of the native tribes he "made a point of never going beyond half an hour in the address, knowing the frivolity of their minds."¹ But where as in his first journey Vanderkemp sometimes found there were really Christian people who had long missed all opportunities of public worship, such scanty measure was laid aside for an ampler draught of the living water.

A most remarkable glimpse of the real piety which existed here and there in these vast regions is given in Vanderkemp's narrative of this expedition. One afternoon the missionary party came to a glen where wild sugar-cane was growing, and just outside it, on rising ground, stood a farm house with numerous outbuildings and orchard and a luxuriant vineyard. It was an agreeable sight after the long hours of travel through uninhabited land. The whole place had a prosperous look and suggested home-life and happy human relationships.

¹ "Travels in South Africa. Second Journey." Vol. I., p. 248.

swiftly. The earth sparkled with frost-crystals and the sky with stars. To the missionaries' camp-fire came seven Hottentots and sat down for friendly talk. One whose name was Courage asked Vanderkemp whether God had created Hottentots as well as Christians, "for," said he, "you know that the Dutch farmers teach us, that He never created *us*, nor takes any notice of *us*." Then Vanderkemp came nearer and sat with them beside the red and yellow fire, and told them that all men alike were in need of God's mercy, and all alike might find everlasting happiness through faith in Christ. And Courage at first belied his name, but was kindled again, and when he parted from them took the interpreter aside—for as yet Vanderkemp had to speak through him—and said: "Father, I will always remember these words, and I will go in all my distress to Jesus, and after I have settled my affairs with my master I will follow you into Kafirland."

On June 29th the party safely reached Graaff Reinet near the frontier of the Colony, beyond which lay the land of darkness. There the *landdrost* (the resident magistrate) and others endeavoured to detain them. A war, or "sort of war", was going on between Kafirs and Colonists, complicated by conflict between some of the latter and the authorities at Cape Town. All this made any attempt to enter Kafirland exceedingly hazardous. But the answer of the missionaries was that they counted not their lives dear if they were required to lose them in the service of their Lord and that they took courage from their recent experience in travelling through a most dangerous region.

July 10th saw them on their way again and thereafter the signs of trouble were of daily recurrence. At night on the 30th, six beacon-fires leaped from the mountain tops, signals, as the Colonists in their vicinity told them, of an imminent Kafir raid. When daylight came all who could assemble gathered what belongings were to hand and accompanied Vanderkemp and his party in a retreat towards a safer district. They had not long been on the road before a great crowd of Kafirs poured down a neighbouring mountain with terrifying yells. Vanderkemp and Edmonds took no part in the actual fighting which ensued and instructed their servants to act only on the

defensive. The battle lasted an hour, after which the enemy withdrew, leaving some of their number dead.

The whole situation, from Vanderkemp's viewpoint, was confused. Amongst these border-colonists there were both friendly and unfriendly men. Some Hottentots could be trusted and some made mischief between white men, whilst others of the natives were ready to desert to the Kafirs in any critical moment. Happily the position became clearer through the return of a deputation which Vanderkemp had sent to King Gaika. From this it appeared that the main body of Kafirs under their chieftain were disposed to be friendly to the Colony, but that some of his subjects had broken loose from his authority and were bent upon harassing the white man wherever possible. Gaika sent a friendly message to the missionaries inviting them to his court, and with it his tobacco-box as a passport.

To Vanderkemp this seemed a Divine encouragement to proceed. Unhappily Edmonds's zeal had been thoroughly chilled by all he had gone through, in perils of wild beasts, in perils of wilder men, and for him the way was obscured by fear.

There are days that search out the quality of human metal. Missionary work, like physical war, develops character with a rapidity unknown in civil life. How often has the pioneer Christian, beset by terrifying savages, recalled the home-church with its congregation of friendly faces and its inner circle of saintly men girding him for his life's work. Then the church lamps and the lights of loving eyes give place to the lurid and menacing heats of those who own no God, no loyalty to Truth and goodwill. At such times it is seen of what stuff a man's Christianity is.

"Doctor," said Edmonds, "do you as you think best, but I deem it advisable to abandon this mission in which there seems so little token of the Lord's favour. I—I think—I should like to go to Bengal!"

"Nay," said the other, "these disturbances are but the strugglings of Satan to shut out the Gospel from Kafirland, and the Lord permits them that we may have the more faith in Himself."

For awhile the matter rested there, but after a little

Edmonds discussed the better claims of Bengal with growing purpose. Vanderkemp wrote to the London directors : " The Lord will be with me, and direct me by His counsel. Pray, dear Brethren, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified even as it is with you, and that I may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men. If I be left alone, one or two pious assistants able to teach reading and writing to the Kafirs, and if possible acquainted with the Dutch language, would be a valuable acquisition."

Shortly after these things peace was concluded between Gaika and the white people whereby the road into Kafirland was again open. Vanderkemp thought they should push on but had to write in his Journal : " Brother Edmonds was of a contrary opinion, being afraid that we provoked God, who had once delivered us from death, by pushing forward into new dangers. He submitted, however, to accompany me as he saw no means of going back into the Colony. Accordingly we prepared for our journey."

On September 2nd an urgent letter from a Dutch Colonist was received begging the missionaries to remain within the border and to minister to himself and his neighbours and such of the heathen as were in his neighbourhood. Also Bruntjie, the guide, disapproved of the forward move. He said that the Kafirs had seen muskets with bayonets amongst the party, and had pointed to them as the very weapons whereby their countrymen had been treacherously murdered. The Kafirs looked upon Vanderkemp and Edmonds as sent to betray them and they would certainly kill the missionaries first if war were to break out again. Vanderkemp writes : " Satan pressed me very hard ; but the more the difficulties and dangers were mentioned the more I was excited in my mind to go forward and I found my faith increased . . . my mind easy and at rest in the Lord." Upon which one thinks of Cæsar's great words :

Cowards die many times before their deaths ;
The valiant never taste of death but once.

Early in September the missionaries set out, passing through

a war-devastated region, where farm buildings were lying in blackened ruins and the cornfields yet smoked from the incendiary fires. Side by side with these tokens of human savagery was the inexhaustible beauty of God. The rocks were spiked with thousands of aloes in full blossom. From a hill top which reminded Vanderkemp of the Hill *Difficulty* in the *Pilgrim's Progress* they caught a vision of Kafirland—green fields and woods, the home of thousands of screaming parrots. Lions bathed in the river-shallows. Troops of wild horses galloped up to meet the travellers sniffing their odour with distended nostrils. Now and again an antelope leaped across the path. Here stretched a ground covered with wild onions of delicious flavour.

On the 14th of September a Kafir emissary who knew a little Dutch arrived from the King to act as their guide. And then as they drew nearer to Gaika's headquarters every day brought more human contact. On the 20th they reached the royal residence. Vanderkemp writes: "About a hundred Kafirs flocked together, and we inquired for King Gaika; but nobody answered. After we had waited about ten minutes in suspense, the King approached in a majestic and solemn attitude . . . attended on each side by one of his chief men. He was covered with a long robe of panthers' skins, and wore a diadem of copper, and another of beads round his head. He had in his hand an iron kiri, and his cheeks and lips were painted red. He stopped about twenty paces from us, and one of his captains then signified that it was the King. We then stepped towards him, and he at the same time marched forward. He reached us his right hand, but spoke not a word. I then delivered him his tobacco-box, which we had filled with buttons. He accepted it and gave it to one of his attendants. At a distance behind him stood his captains and women, in the form of a half-moon; and at a great distance the rest of the people. During all this time he moved not an eyelid, nor changed the least feature in his countenance. I then asked loudly, if there were no one who could speak Dutch, and serve as an interpreter; but nobody spoke, only some smiled."

A quarter of an hour elapsed without further movement on either side. At intervals Vanderkemp repeated his request.

Then a white man came out from amongst the King's retinue—Koenraad Buys, a Dutch fugitive from the Cape, at that time involved in very grave political offences. The parley began. Little could be settled at once. Indeed many days passed in the endeavour to establish good relations with the King and his people, and in efforts to learn the rudiments of their language and their customs. It was not easy to do the one thing or the other. There were difficulties, too, of other kinds. Hoby, the King's sister, took too great a fancy to these two white men, and intruded upon their tent at night-time, having to be gently but firmly put out. Piet Prinslo, a Dutch Colonist, who on their departure from the Colony had shown them a good deal of ambiguous attention, contrived to poison the King's mind against them, representing them as spies and assassins armed with enchanted wine. Of this Vanderkemp writes : " I communicated to Buys what we had heard. . . . He confirmed the fact, but would not name the accuser. He said it had made strong impressions on the mind of the King and the nation, and that he himself had been much prejudiced against us ; but he hoped that they were entirely effaced, at least out of the mind of the King, who was now inclined to allow us to stay in his country."

A few other extracts from the Journal will reveal the varying prospects of the mission :

September 24th.—In the morning Buys attended at our family worship and told us he was convinced that God had sent us ; he would be our friend, come down himself with his children and family out of the country of the Tambouchis to build an house for me on the other side of the great river T'Keiskamma. How inexpressibly wonderful are Thy ways, O our God !

September 26th.—Gaika visited us in the morning. Hoby, Cepoebana, Noemza, Gamnadama and some other women came in to bring us milk. They howled and danced as crazy people whilst I was ready to worship with our people. Just before I had got strength from *Psalm 46* (*God is our refuge and strength*) and now *Revelation 2, 26* (*He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the*

nations) shone bright upon my mind. I looked up to God, read and prayed on our knees in their presence, and they stood silent speaking not one word. Brother Edmonds was this day very ill, and feverish with pains in his bowels, being not accustomed to live in the Kafir way. He was also much troubled in his mind.

September 30th.—Gaika has not, as yet, given us a formal answer to my proposition of staying in this country upon the mentioned conditions. But as we have seen so many wonders of our Lord's hand, overruling the hearts of this barbarous nation and the machinations of our secret enemies to destroy our lives by their hands (all which we consider as wrestlings of Satan to keep us from what might be justly called his territory) we may, by anticipation, say, that in our next quarter we hope to record more wonders than these, to the glory and praise of Him who has the key of David ; *He who openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth*. Amen and Amen !

October 3rd.—Our Hottentot, with Bruntjie, pressed me very hard to return to the Colony till a more favourable period should give me admittance. The uneasiness of Brother Edmonds, who wished to prosecute his plan, and to go to Bengal, teased me also and I myself was almost exhausted, but I looked up to God, praying that He would rule and keep my heart quiet as I relied upon Him. A few minutes after Buys came in telling us that the King would open his mouth this day ; that he only waited for the arrival of two messengers more. Gaika married this day a third wife. When we had laid ourselves down to sleep, one of his captains came in with two girls, begging us to accept them, and to come with them and make merry with the King, and the rest of the company. This we declined.

October 4th.—We insisted again by means of Mr. Buys, upon having a decisive answer from the King, that I might be assured of his friendship, my own safety and liberty to stay in his dominions, or to go when I chose ; but he not only continued silent, but even refused to admit Buys into his presence. The old accusation of our being Englishmen and betrayers, was said to be renewed in the mind of Gaika, and that we must not be surprised if we were all put to death next day. T'Zlambi,

the King's uncle, had visited him that day, but had not taken any notice of us. Buys himself was doubtful of his own safety. All this evil was imputed to me, as having led our people into these dangers ; notwithstanding they knew that I many times had warned them against them, and that they had accompanied me by their own choice. As for me, I knew that when I entered into this country, I entered it, having the sentence of death in myself, that I should not trust in myself, but in God, who raiseth the dead. I knew that all this bad work was Satan's doing ; and I knew, by experience, that it was wrong to attempt to fight against him in my own strength, as I had always found him too strong for me ; that the only way to overcome him was to give the battle into the hand of the Lord, and to wait for the victory from Him ; and He enabled me, by His grace, now to do so. . . . Brother Edmonds, who behaved in this circumstance as a faithful brother, prayed with me, and for me, earnestly.

Mr. Buys decided upon a bold course. He announced his intention of returning to his family and of ceasing all connection with Gaika. Gaika had his own reasons for disapproving the separation and so was constrained to alter his attitude to the missionaries. He had to climb down and was fairly lectured by Buys for his vacillating conduct. The crisis ended in a free and open permission to Vanderkemp and his party to stay in the country, or to leave it, as they wished. They were assured of protection and a field was assigned them on the other side of the river. The Journal proceeds :

October 7th.—I pulled one of the plants, of which I used the stalk for food, up by the root, which had the figure of a carrot. Cutting it transversely I observed it had stained my knife with a deep black colour. I then threw some iron-nails into a decoction of it and found that it gave me a good ink, of which this Journal is a specimen. (He adds a Latin description of the plant.)

October 10th.—Bruntjie refused to go to Gaika again, unless I found an interpreter to go with him. I then went in the afternoon to the nearest Kraal, where I engaged a Hottentot

to go with him the next day. I stayed sometime at this Kraal, and, returning in the evening, by mistaking one stream for another, I lost entirely my way ; thus I wandered for one half hour backwards and forwards till I could find neither my tent nor my Kraal, but was obliged to give it up to the Lord. I then laid myself down, resolved to sleep there, but the wolves gave me no rest. As I had nothing to defend myself with but a Kafir kiri in my hand, I resolved to go straightway westward, but the moment I set out I was warned, by the barking of dogs (which I took to be ours) and heard at a considerable distance over a ridge of mountains just behind me, that I was wrong. I then returned, directed by their repeated barkings. When I passed the river a large kayman plunged into it. I went through a thick wood, and arrived not at our tent, but at old Appollonia's Kraal, who gave me two men, that put me in the right road to our tent.

The insecurity of a white man's life in an uncivilised land is continually reflected in Vanderkemp's Journal. Oxen and horses are stolen and have to be traced and contended for, not once nor twice. The King's favour, upon which life itself depends, is as changeable as April weather in England. News arrives one day that the interpreter Buys has had his house and waggon burnt while his wife and nine children have simply disappeared—perhaps been murdered. (Afterwards they are found safe and sound.) At night wolves mimic the shrieks of women and the cries of children. Then the same wild creatures make the forest ring with peals of weird laughter, banishing all sleep from sensitive men. At another time a cow aided by her sister cattle does battle with a wolf, in defence of her calf, and in her excitement will not suffer the camp dogs—too like the enemy to be trusted—to assist in the fight.

Nature in such a country vibrates with fear. It is not only that actual dangers exist from the beasts that lurk in the dense thickets, animated, as sometimes appears, with almost superhuman intelligence, but that men are ever suspecting each other of secret machinations, poisonings, wizardry, or of sudden outflashing of war weapons. When Vanderkemp and his party kneel in evening prayer, the simultaneous movement so scares

a native who is present that he seizes his assagai and flees for his life. A young Kafir woman, coming to visit them, is terrified at the appearance of their tent, which is large and unfamiliar in design. Seeing it shake in the wind, she believes it to be a wild beast let loose by the white men to destroy her. In her panic she rushes into the forest and through a river, and never stops until her heaving breasts are impaled upon the spikes of a baboon-trap. So the whole land quivers with endless varieties of fear, and daily life there is like walking amid constant earthquakes. Only he who has reckoned with death should attempt it. Happily, Vanderkemp had faced ultimate things.

After a little the prospect brightened. He took possession of the field appointed him and thus records his settlement :

October 20th.—We departed this morning at eight o'clock to the place where we intended to settle, and arrived there at five o'clock. Here we found Bota, Buys, (who went on horseback before us) two English deserters, a Hottentot, and a Tambouchi in a hut after the Kafir fashion, but somewhat larger and of an oblong form. We had rain this day and thunder. Before this house we had a beautiful field of grass in the middle of an amphitheatre of high mountains, inhabited by numbers of Kafirs, divided into different kraals, eleven of which were very near us. Round the foot of the mountain the river Guakoeby ran, affording us most excellent water. The ascent to the mountains was covered by a thick wood of timber of every kind ; some of the trees were above a hundred feet high. Above this wood towards the top of the mountain were meadows of a vast extent and of a beautiful verdure, and the top itself was covered with inaccessible woods. I thanked my Lord for having brought me safe to a resting place, through so many difficulties and dangers ; a place which, I am in great hopes, by its concentric arches, may encompass and cherish the first seeds of a church among this people.

October 22nd.—Buys and I divided the field between ourselves, and I looked for a place to build a house, and to plant a garden. Buys with his people insisted on building this house for me themselves as soon as he should have brought his family

from the Tambouchis. Brother Edmonds and I cut long grass and rushes for thatching, and I cut trees in the wood. I kneeled down upon this grass . . . praying that from under this roof the seed of the Gospel might spread northwards through all Africa.

The days passed busily in clearing the ground and in making a garden. Vanderkemp sowed lettuce and carrots and planted red currants, peaches, apricots and potatoes. A little later calabashes, melons, cucumbers and pumpkins were sown and an oven constructed. On November 1st Vanderkemp writes: "I began to build my house, in which my brother Edmonds assisted me." November 3rd marked the beginning of a more systematic family worship for all who would attend. Some six weeks later a day-school comprising some twelve young people was begun, for instruction in reading and writing as well as for religious teaching. One of the English army-deserters, Thomas Bentley, had now become warmly attached to the missionaries and desired to settle with Vanderkemp if he could procure his formal release from military obligations. He gave a startling piece of information. Four deserters, he said, had been sent out from the Colony, to kill Vanderkemp and Edmonds on the road. They had actually lain in wait for the party but by a sheer accident had missed them. Vanderkemp's Journal does not say by whom this murder-plot was contrived, but clearly only white men would be likely to hire English deserters for such a purpose. The incident casts light upon the state of public opinion about missions in the more unsettled parts of the Colony.

Edmonds had now made all his preparations for departure. He had borne his part quite honourably in the practical work of the mission. His hands had not been idle though his nerves were shaky. Dreams of India—the age was full of attractive illusions about India—allured him. He does not seem to have greatly worried about the elderly man he was leaving amid so many dangers and with such a tremendous enterprise before him. He had less excuse than John Mark, who withdrew from Paul and Barnabas in Pamphylia and *went not with them to the work*. The following entries show that the apostle he forsook

was not a whit behind the apostle of the Gentiles in forbearance.

December 29th.—My dear brother Edmonds departed with my blessing. Our separation is, however, not to be ascribed to a diminution of fraternal love, which I am persuaded is unaltered, but to an insurmountable aversion to this people, and a strong desire to live among the Bengalese. Oh that the blessing of Christ and his peace may follow him. Amen. Amen.

January 1st, 1800.—To see my brother Edmonds departing from me was a very trying circumstance ; but the Lord supported me. He returns to the Cape with a view to proceed to Bengal, in the fullest confidence that the Lord has called him to labour in that country. Before he left me, we went over the river into a wood, and there we wrestled in prayer once more, which was often interrupted by our tears. After I had recommended him to the Grace of the Lord, I gave him my last blessing and he took a final leave of me. I went upon a hill, and followed his waggon for about half an hour with my eyes, when, it sinking behind the mountains, I lost sight of him to see him no more.

So Brother Edmonds went his way and in Cape Town wrote two long letters to the London directors, earnestly worded and sincere, explaining his action and deprecating their censure which, however, he did not wholly escape. Incidentally he mentioned that on parting Vanderkemp gave him a money draft “ as a present ”. It was on Vanderkemp’s private funds, which we learn elsewhere yielded an annual income of £137 16s. 6d. Apparently the gift was to help Edmonds’s passage to India. It seems probable that Edmonds found he could make his way without availing himself of this draft and that he destroyed it. In any case he carried with him into his new field of service the influence of a most magnanimous colleague. One doubts whether St. Paul, although much grace abounded in him, offered to finance John Mark’s voyage back from Pamphylia !

CHAPTER XII

SARAH

SHE was a Hottentot living in Kafirland. When little more than a child a man came and bought her as his bride, paying her parents two cows. She gave her arms and breasts and back a fresh coat of variously-hued paint and thus adorned went with him to his kraal. There he showed her his pit in the common central store where he kept his corn, gave her lodging with his people, and then bade her set to work and build a house for himself and her. He was not more unkind than most men and helped her by cutting and bringing to her the long sticks of which the framework of the house was to be built. Some of her female neighbours showed her how to go to work. Day after day she toiled, planting the sticks and bending them at the tops so as to make arches and of these a domed roof, then filling in the intervening spaces with lighter material. She did the thatching too. The work was not so very heavy and her husband sat and smoked and gave her directions, when he was not milking the cows, nor hunting, nor on a marauding expedition with other men.

After the house was built she had some leisure to wander about the kraal and to go into the fields and woods. She saw the famous anchor which had been brought from a wreck on the coast and which men saluted as they passed, believing it to be in some sort a Divine thing, like the image which fell down from Jupiter at Ephesus or the black stone of Mecca. And she heard of the strange man dressed in green who appeared in thunder storms, though she herself never saw him. Her husband told her that he had not seen him, but that his father's friend had, and all the neighbours too. That was once when the whole of the neighbouring mountain was ablaze with lightning and the earth itself seemed emitting myriads of large sparks, almost flames. The man had a long green skin hung

over his shoulders and tufts of grasses decked his head, and as he stood leaning against a tree stump he cried with a loud voice: "Do not be afraid, I only play with this country." Someone then went forward to offer him milk, for clearly he was a great sorcerer who lived in some inaccessible height whence the storms burst upon the kraals, but he vanished as quickly as he had come, and with him the storm went also. Then everyone put on new clothes and left the kraal uninhabited for a short time. Such was ever their custom when the man in green appeared.

So Sarah learnt the wisdom of her husband's village, and when in due course she had to face the strange experience of childbirth, and, as was usual at such times, all her women friends forsook her as one tabooed, she thought of the Green man, whom the Kafirs called "the Lord up above," and she wondered whether there was any Heavenly Friend like him to comfort a poor creature in the bewilderments and painful experiences of life.

This thought helped her, too, when she had her first glimpse of a white man—a truly frightening experience. He was just one of the occasional unhappy fugitives from Cape law who had taken refuge amongst the Kafirs. Sarah stood for a moment horrified and fascinated. A white face had in it something cold and inscrutable. It affected her as once in her girlhood she had been scared by seeing in the evening a flood of moonlight falling upon the white back of a wild horse as it stood feeding on the forest verge. But the white man soon was gone and she breathed more freely. Afterwards she thought perchance he was not to be feared but was like the man dressed in green who came with the lightning to encourage poor folk.

Day by day she had her work in the house, preparing the meals, and in the garden, where she grew pumpkins and water melons, and in the fields, where with other women she sowed millet and, when the inch-thick stalks were some eight or nine feet tall, gathered the grain and bruised it between stones, making therefrom bread and also a malted drink.

So time passed and Sarah had three children given to her. And then came the wonderful change which opened to her all the meaning of the world. She had grown accustomed to see

white men and though she feared them all because of their strangeness and their suggestion of hidden powers, some she saw were kindly and not unlike black men in their feelings. One day John Vanderkemp came her way, and at once she realised that in this tall, spare man, with the lofty head which always was bare, there breathed a sympathy she had never before tasted. He spoke to her of her husband and her children and then invited her to come to his house in the meadow by the river, and bring any friend she liked with her. Others like herself would be there and he would tell her of the great God who had made all things. At that she ran away, because her Hottentot name for God was *Thuuikée* which means "he who induces pain," a kind of super-Jabez whom it will be remembered his mother so named because she bore him with pain. Sarah quite realised that there was above all men, and above the man dressed in green, this great Being who, however, made the lot of common people like herself, and especially the lot of women, so hard. Therefore she did not at once accept the white teacher's invitation so hear more about Him. But after a little, despite *Thuuikée*, the kindly eyes of Vanderkemp and his dignity and courtesy with her persisted in her mind, until she was constrained to go very slowly and timidly towards his house. There she saw that children from her own kraal were standing about the doorway and as she drew near she heard a hum of voices within. The white teacher was speaking to a group of naked little ones, and one or two grown-up men, and amongst these, to her great astonishment, was Gaika the King. He, too, was listening and learning to make curious marks on what looked like white leaves, and to speak names in parts, as though every word were made up of many smaller words. Presently the teacher stopped and the white leaves with their strange marks on them were put away. He began to speak of the wrongs men and women did in stealing and in lying, and in drinking, and in killing, and of how *Thuuikée*, or *Thiko* as the Kafirs called Him, knew all and would punish all, either before or after death, which again made her tremble very much. But he spoke too of one Jesus Christ, the Son of *Thuuikée*, who had loved men and lived and died for them, bearing their sins, so that *Thuuikée* for

His sake would forgive and save. That was the beginning of the teaching of Tinkhanna—so all the Kafir people called John Vanderkemp—and Sarah came often to his meetings and to talk with him alone. And the Lord's messenger brought her great stirrings of hope in Himself.

Then, however, followed Até—the Spirit of Discord, who so often comes quick upon the heels of the Heavenly Hermes. The strange new good in and around Sarah, and the thought of the white teacher's favour towards her, awoke jealousy and hatred in her neighbours. Her stock of food ran low; no one would give to her and her children. Her husband shrugged his shoulders and fended for himself. When she told these things to Vanderkemp he endeavoured to buy a couple of sheep for her, but was unsuccessful.

However, God sent her help in another way and the trouble passed. Two of her female relatives now came with her to the missionary's meeting. And he wrote in his Journal, under date July 30th, 1800: "In the afternoon this woman told me that she incessantly prayed to Jesus, that He might reveal Himself to her soul, and teach her what she ought to know. This filled my heart with joy, and I prayed the Lord that it might please Him to accompany the unworthy efforts of His vile servant with the influences of His Spirit. And O! how did my soul rejoice that the Lord had given me in this wilderness among tigers and wolves, and at such a distance from Christians, a poor heathen woman, with whom I could converse confidentially of the mysteries of the hidden communion with Christ. O! that I may not be deceived. Lo! my winter is past—the voice of a turtle is already heard in the land!"

Then, on August 2nd.—"I asked her how it was with her heart? She answered that she continued in prayer, and meditation on Jesus, and that the tendency of her soul seemed to be more than transitory, but that she found it was impossible for her to give her heart up to Him. I then observed that it was an important instruction to be taught by experience the impossibility of setting our heart at liberty, and breaking through the chains by which we were bound to sin and unbelief, by our own strength, and that even this experience

suggested a powerful motive to rely entirely on the grace of Christ, and to trust implicitly to His strength and assistance."

No doubt the good doctor put the matter to Sarah in a simpler form than this. One day he asked her if she suffered any anxiety. She replied that she had one concern : she was afraid of losing the impression she now had of Christ. A few weeks later she confessed that her sins were still as a heavy weight upon her soul but that she constantly looked up to Jesus, even in her dreams, and longed to be united to Him, but was afraid to speak of these things to her husband and friends.

Meanwhile "Satan roared like a lion." Vanderkemp was accused of conspiring against the King and was forbidden to instruct the heathen any more. Indeed his death was decreed. Still he continued to teach, and after a little the roaring lessened. Vanderkemp removed to a place some four miles lower down the river. There Sarah and other Hottentots visited him and grew in grace thereby. Two of the women, Betsy and Kate, who lived with Sarah, now began to show some promise of conversion. Kate was a shepherdess. Both women could only come to Vanderkemp as Nicodemus came to Jesus, by night. All his candles were now gone and nobody had one to give him. So he says he spoke the word of life "with uncommon earnestness," packing much into the scanty twilight-time and reading when he could by the moonlight. Some raillery no doubt was made of all this, for he adds: "I found much pleasure in being despised with them and Christ on account of His Gospel, hoping that, though we had no candle to read by, yet the light of the Gentiles shone into their hearts."

On October 15th he records : "I baptised Sarah, and two of her children named Hannah and Sarah, in the river Keissi . . . the third child being absent ; and then laid my hands upon her, praying the Holy Ghost to descend into the heart of His handmaid to fulfil the promise of the purification of her sins, now sealed to her in His name also by Baptism." Sarah's absent child, being four years old, was baptised a few days later and named Christina.

Then came a sore trial. Sarah and her children had to

remove to a distant part of the country. "I cannot well express how this struck me, seeing the first fruits and hope of a rising church taken from me, yet in the bud, and exposed to all the malice of Satan, and an evil world, without any means of grace except what her Bible could afford her, which she could spell tolerably well. I thanked the Lord who had granted me time to teach her to spell with an almost equal facility written characters, and to write them herself. In the evening worship I read the chapter of the day, which was *Luke 7*, and was astonished to find that it ended with these remarkable words: *And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace !* which were the last words that I read to her out of the Bible, and I got strength to apply these words to her case in the name of Jesus."

The next day, he records : " After I had given some written notes on the saving doctrine of Christ to Sarah, to assist her memory, and we with oppressed hearts had wrestled with God in prayer, I gave her over unto the care of Jesus, and we comforted each other by mutual faith in His promises. She was taught in a striking manner by Jesus to be meek and lowly in heart. With her departed also the two Hottentot women Betsy and Kate, of whom I had conceived great hopes. I then made mine the words of *Jeremiah 10*, vv. 19, 20 : *Woe is me for my hurt ! My wound is grievous : but I said, Truly this is my grief, and I must bear it. My tent is spoiled and all my cords are broken ; my children are gone forth of me, and they are not : there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains.*"

But as another Scripture says :

*Weeping may come in to lodge at even,
In the morning—Joy !*

Three days later Sarah's destination turned out to be just the spot where the King had suddenly determined Vanderkemp himself must live. They met therefore again and the good work of instruction was resumed.

The last months of that year, 1801, during which Vanderkemp laboured alone, were spent in wanderings that were full

of incident but without prospect of any issue in a real settlement of the mission. That he escaped from the hostility of the King's followers was due partly to his own utter fearlessness, partly, I think, to the fact that his prayers for rain in a time of drought were followed by a torrential downpour. Unquestionably the Kafirs were seething with malignancy. Three shipwrecked Englishmen wandering about were murdered. There were constant thefts of cattle from the encampments of white men. At last the position as between black and white became intolerable. The Colonists, as Vanderkemp always calls the miscellaneous body of whites who roamed about Kafirland, determined to find refuge in Cape Colony. This decision rendered the position of Vanderkemp the more precarious. A year had elapsed since his colleague's departure. He had found it impossible to settle in any one place, owing to the King's fickleness and duplicity. Such response as had come to his teaching was chiefly from Hottentots and this race dwelt more within the borders of the Colony. Was it the Lord's will he should migrate thither with the other white men? He prayed, asking a sign rather after the manner of Gideon and his fleece. The answer was, Go, and he went. On the evening of the 31st December he and his fellow travellers passed the last kraal in Kafirland.

This was the end of Vanderkemp's mission to that country, for although he made a brief visit to King Gaika some months later, he was led to devote himself henceforth to service amongst the Hottentot people within the Colony.

There was some sadness in his heart as he left, mitigated by the fact that Sarah and a few other of his converts accompanied him. In recording his decision to depart he unveils his own religious conceptions in a rather striking way: "I thought my heart was inclined to do whatever the Lord's pleasure might be if I only might know His will, or enjoy the favour that He secretly would direct my inclination to what should be right in His eyes, as I knew my heart to be deceitful. I was convinced that the Lord had sent me to Kafirland; but might not this have been for the conversion of Sarah? There were many widows in Israel, but for the sake of one only was Elijah sent!"

Not too great a price was it to pay that for some year and a half he had lived in loneliness, in privation and in daily hazard of his life, if thereby he could win one soul for Christ. There comes to mind a verse in that immortal Scots song, or hymn, which was woven out of the letters of Samuel Rutherford, and which reflects his ministry at Anwoth :

Fair Anwoth by the Solway,
To me thou still art dear !
E'en from the verge of Heaven
I drop for thee a tear.

Oh ! if one soul from Anwoth
Meet me at God's right hand,
My heaven will be two Heavens
In Immanuel's land.

Vanderkemp was of Rutherford's way of judgment as were all the most discerning of our Lord's servants in olden time. Their valuations were framed from Scripture. To the Hebrew psalmists the soul was so divine a thing that they spoke of it as a "glory" (*Pss.* 7, 5 ; 16, 9 ; 30, 12 ; 57, 8 ; 108, 1). Jesus took over this valuation and would have gone to Calvary to save but one. *What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?* The seer of the *Revelation* accounted the measure of a man as the measure of an angel (21, 17). And they who have the Spirit of discernment are wont to see in the most unpromising human material a fabric, which, however dark and stained, is shot with threads of gold. But it takes some uncommon spirituality to see this. Truly has Pascal said: "The greater intellect one has, the more originality one finds in men. Ordinary persons find no difference between men." In sheer intellect Vanderkemp was head and shoulders above all his contemporaries at the Cape and just because of this he esteemed the Kafir and the Hottentot with a truer perception of their potential value. Yet it was more than intellectual power which quickened his apprehensions. In other times men of greater gifts of mind than his have entered little into the heart of an African. Without

sympathy the loftiest genius will see only a short distance into human reality. But one cannot read Vanderkemp's journals and letters without being touched by his deep pity for all who suffered, or who were spiritually destitute. Love, operating through a richly cultivated mind, opened to him the heart of a savage, and showed him human qualities like jewels that glitter embedded in the walls of a dark abyss. There might be but one such nature accessible to his influence, yet the worth of that one was greater than all the world.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FIRST CLASH WITH THE COLONISTS

WHILE Vanderkemp was yet in Kafirland the breath of malignancy, generated by the antipathy of certain Colonists to the black peoples, had not only at times warped the mind of the Kafir King against him but had travelled west to Cape Town, poisoning the good sense of its Governor, Sir George Yonge. Vanderkemp was charged with political disloyalty.

Accustomed as we are to think that the quick diffusion of both news and ideas is a modern development, it is perhaps surprising to find that in the year 1800 Jacobinism should have appeared in the remote inland borders of Cape Colony. It seems a far cry from the revolutionary party in Paris to the Kafir kraals of King Gaika. But at the very time when the Cape passed into English hands a revolutionary Government on Parisian lines actually had been set up at Graaf Reinet near the Kafir frontier. On the movement of sufficient military forces to the disaffected district this Government collapsed and the burghers accepted the English authority. Discontent, however, continued. It turned largely upon the native question in which the farmers desired to have either official support, or a free hand, to enforce white dominion over some disputed territory, and generally to bring their Hottentot servants into more thorough subjection. As the policy of the Government was to avoid all conflict with natives and as the resident Commissioner at Graaf Reinet, Mr. H. C. Maynier, was a humane administrator, careful to protect the black tribes against white men's aggression, the latent Republicanism of the Boers continually threatened fresh attempts at revolution. Further, as often happens in frontier districts where civilisation fades into savagery, desperadoes of all sorts, black and white, roamed about, ready to raid and plunder the more

peaceful settlers. So political disaffection and general lawlessness made troubled waters for cunning fishers. Those who hated the very idea of the Christianising of Kafirs, represented to Sir George Yonge that Vanderkemp was indoctrinating these wild people, not with the pure milk of the Gospel, but with the fiery spirit of the Jacobins. It was an infamous lie, but a Chinese proverb rightly says "a lie will travel a hundred leagues while the truth is putting on its shoes." The lie worked. The Governor endeavoured to secure Vanderkemp's return. This, however, the latter at that time did not find possible, Gaika refusing him permission to leave. Sir George Yonge then wrote to the Secretary of State in England: "I have undoubted intelligence that Vanderkemp, who has been making excuses for not leaving Guyka, though repeatedly required"—this, by the way, was a gross exaggeration—"has been propagating, not Christianity, but the very (Jacobin) principles above stated, and is at this moment the confidential friend and companion at Guyka's of the fugitive rebel Conrad de Buys. . . . They are inseparable, live and lodge together at Guyka's, and there is every reason to think de Buys is very far from being converted or discouraged by his new friend and companion."¹

Not many months after these words were penned, Vanderkemp, as we have seen, was on his way back from Kafirland, knowing something of the bad Colonial feelings he had to face, but quite unaware of the slanderous reports which had defamed him at Cape Town and in London. On his journey he found many opportunities of ministering to both black and white. With Sarah and her children were a few Hottentot women whom he instructed and in some cases baptised. There were twenty in all under his teaching.

The party reached Graaf Reinet on May 14th where Vanderkemp found awaiting him two new colleagues, Messrs. Vanderlingen and Read. He was received by the Commissioner Maynier with "uncommon civilities." Maynier was, indeed, a high-minded man with a keen sense of justice, and one who, had he been allowed to remain in office at Graaf Reinet, would

¹ "A History of Christian Missions in South Africa" by Professor Du Plessis, Litt. D. D.D., p. 124.

have proved an invaluable colleague to Vanderkemp in the establishment of a decent social order out of the chaotic human elements—native and Boer—which, with their incessant conflicts, made life hideous. Unhappily the machinations of his enemies secured his removal from office. Considerable light falls upon the character of the white community in the Eastern portion of the Colony by the fact that this able and impartial civil servant was made the subject of the gravest accusations by the Boer farmers, on the strength of which he was put on his trial at Cape Town before a special commission of inquiry. This commission completely vindicated him, pronouncing him “a faithful servant of Government, conducting himself upon every occasion as an upright and honest man.” Each accusation—and there were many—was disproved, and the Government awarded him £1,000 in consideration of the material and moral damage he had sustained. In order, however, to conciliate the Boer farmers he was not reinstated in office.

To go back a little in our story, Vanderkemp lost no time in getting into touch with the local church at Graaf Reinet, which almost immediately invited him to become its minister. This he could not accede to, as he realised his call was to the heathen. Vanderlingen, however, accepted the position. Every evening the Hottentots who had accompanied Vanderkemp and such others in the village as were disposed assembled for worship and instruction in the church. In harmony with the Erastianism of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, Mr. Maynier’s permission had to be sought for this. He readily agreed. It soon appeared, however, that the Church-members were displeased. The resulting situation is illustrated in the record of one of the most curious missionary prayer-meetings ever held. Writing on June 1st, 1801, Vanderkemp says: “At the missionary prayer-meeting which was kept this evening in the Church, beside the Church-members a great number of heathen of the Hottentot and other nations were present, who opened this solemnity by singing *Psalm 134*:

Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, who by night stand in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the

sanctuary, and bless the Lord. The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion : which was answered by the Christian congregation singing *Psalm 74, 4-10 :*

Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations ; they set up their ensigns for signs. A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees. But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers. . . . We see not our signs : there is no more any prophet : neither is there among us any that knoweth how long. O God, how long shall the adversary reproach ? Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever ?

One wonders whether in this passage the terms “ Church-member ” and “ heathen ” should not be transposed.

Growlings within the Church were accompanied by more articulate opposition without. On June 30th news came of the approach of a body of armed Boers, who under a pretext that they had been driven from their homes by Kafirs—a pretext “ soon proved to be false ” presented their complaints against both Mr. Maynier’s protection of the Hottentots and Kafirs—whereby they said these tribes were encouraged to rob and murder them—and against the missionaries’ efforts to instruct the natives in reading, writing and religion. They declared that such instruction placed natives on an equal footing with Christians ; they objected also to the Church being used by natives and they said they were prepared, by force if necessary, to compel the Commissioner to stop such proceedings.

Maynier stood firm, though his military resources were of the scantiest. The missionary work continued. On July 8th thirty-six catechumens were enrolled, having declared “ their wish to have an interest in Christ, and their willingness to leave off drunkenness, swearing, stealing, whoredom, etc.” The next day the rebel force approached and a parley ensued. Vanderkemp offered to discontinue his Hottentot meetings in the Church and to hold them elsewhere. He went on to say : “ Those Colonists, who should like to join the Hottentots in Divine Worship should always be welcome in our meetings, which should be open to everyone without distinction, but that *I never would preach in a church, from which a Heathen congregation should be excluded.*”

His offer was accepted. Maynier also met the rebel demand for the surrender of Hottentots accused of murder by agreeing to their arrest and trial before the proper judicial authorities, but he declined to hand them over to their accusers.

These terms did not at once give satisfaction, and a few days later Vanderkemp was employed by Maynier as an ambassador of peace. He visited the Boer camp and through his agency the trouble for a time subsided.

One of the main causes of the farmers' discontent was the fact that the Hottentot population at Graaf Reinet now largely consisted of runaway farm-servants. Although these had not much natural enthusiasm for work the Boers did not feel able to carry on their extensive farms without them. Now the Hottentots had grievances, both real and fictitious. Of their real troubles we shall see plenty of evidence. But being ignorant and credulous they were wont to exaggerate every case of ill-treatment, and it is not surprising that, under the influence of unhappy rumours, large numbers left their work and sought the Commissioner's protection in Graaf Reinet.

Thus it happened that Vanderkemp found a Hottentot congregation readily gathering around him, many of whom manifested a quick response to his preaching. Then it came home to him forcibly that he could best fulfil his mission amongst this heathen race. Here was the providential meaning of his departure from Kafirland. Like the Apostle Paul he had assayed to go into a Bithynia and the Spirit of Jesus had suffered him not—unless indeed it had been for Sarah and her few friends—but here at Graaf Reinet he seemed to find his Troas and an opening into a greater field of service. "The Lord has shown us," he wrote, "that He has conducted us to Graaf Reinet, for the sake of a number of Hottentots and heathen of other nations whom we found collected at and near this place, and it has pleased Him to raise a mission among this people, contrary to our intentions; and as He has raised it He has also blessed it." On September 7th he wrote: "Our Hottentot congregation increases gradually in number, knowledge and grace. The number of children at present in our school is sixty-two. We have resolved to fix a small missionary settlement at Graaf Reinet, under the care of one missionary,

consisting of a hall for keeping meetings, and a school, and a house for the missionary ; the Commissioner Maynier gave us for this purpose a piece of ground on the banks of the Sunday River, about 2,660 feet long, and 537 feet broad ; this we accepted in the name of the Missionary Society."

The prospect seemed bright, but all the time rebel parties of Colonists were hovering round the town, keen upon re-establishing their farmsteads with Hottentot labour, and resolved to govern such labour, when they got it, in their own somewhat drastic fashion.

Towards the end of October matters reached a crisis. The rebels surrounded the village. Firing began on both sides. Some houses, including the prison, were burnt down. Others had to be demolished for defence purposes. Vanderkemp, proceeding from his quarters to the Commissioner's, was fired at repeatedly, and again on his return journey, but happily escaped both times. The next day the rebels withdrew.

A few days later Vanderkemp had an important interview with Maynier :

"I had a free conversation with the Commissioner on the state of the Hottentot nation, and the present calamities, and gave as my opinion that the Hottentots should be perfectly free, upon an equal footing in every respect with the Colonists, and by no sort of compulsion brought under a necessity to enter into their service, but have a piece of ground given to them by Government as their own."

This was, indeed, a momentous declaration. It denoted a position far in advance of public opinion in the Colony, and not even to-day is it accepted by the white people of South Africa, nor perhaps by any other European race. On the lips of a weaker man it might have led to nothing. But Vanderkemp was a strong man and one whose opinions were usually expressed in action more than in words. For good or evil, however we judge the value of his position, his emergence at this time upon Colonial affairs, and in particular his declaration just quoted, marks an epoch in the history of what is called the "Native Question". It will be convenient, therefore, now to pause upon it and to consider the judgment passed upon his principles and himself by a certain section of Colonial

opinion as expressed by eminent publicists. Perhaps the most representative of these is Sir George Cory, whose great work, *The Rise of South Africa*, commands widespread respect. He brings Vanderkemp upon the scene with the following words :

“ With an account of this man begins a thread in the historical texture of the Eastern Province, which, as time went on, became more predominant and developed into one of the most important features of the fabric, giving to it its sombre and melancholy hue. In the pattern, gradually unfolded, are seen the systematic and *legalised* robbery by Kafirs, Hottentot rebellion, the abandonment of the Colony by hundreds of its worthy Dutch inhabitants, the grossest misrepresentation which cut off the sympathy of their kinsfolk in their native land from the suffering British Colonists, and a pseudo-philanthropy which had no ears but for the supposed virtues of the black and vices of the white. Had a certain section of the missionary element never appeared in Cape Colony, the history of the East might have been a very different and happier one ” (Vol. I, p. III).

The injustice of the writer of these words is as indubitable as his sincerity. From the beginning of his work onwards in all his treatment of the controversy between the missionaries and the Colonists Sir George Cory is unflinchingly partisan. One is prepared for this by his references to the subject in his preface. There he counsels his readers that in considering the charges brought against the Colonists they should remember the ancient motto—*audi alteram partem*. The introduction of this Latin tag into a controversy usually means quite literally what it says. It is the other side the controversialist wishes to be regarded as the true. A better admonition would be *audi ambas partes*. Had the wisdom of the precept thus revised governed Sir George Cory's judgment he would have consulted more fully the letters and other documentary evidence of the missionaries whose work he had to appraise. How far, again, he has entered with sympathy into the lot of the black peoples, especially the Hottentots, may be judged by such an expression

as this in relation to the latter—"Conciliation was quite useless, *as it ever has been*"¹ (p. 7). When an eminent author writes thus of a black people, what can we expect from the politicians, or the smaller folk who in newspapers, or in the tattle of drawing-rooms, and on the decks of African liners, discuss the native question? Once more on the subject of Hottentot wages, about which Vanderkemp was often justly concerned, Sir George observes that these were probably inadequate but that the farmers were too poor to do better and adds that though the workers were unjustly treated "their case was no worse than, if as bad as, that of the victims of the sweating systems which have disgraced highly civilised countries in later years" (p. 89). Surely this is a most un-historical method of discussion. Do two wrongs make a right? What had sweating systems in modern times to do with the judgment of Boer farmers at the beginning of the nineteenth century in determining the wages of their servants? And have modern wages ever descended quite so low as 4/6 a month for continuous farm labour? Such was the general wage in Vanderkemp's time.² Again, as an instance of the writer's ethical standards where racial questions are concerned, in relating certain troubles during 1781, Sir George describes an incident in which a party of Kafirs were tempted out of their hiding place by some tobacco thrown upon the open ground. They rushed, he tells us, upon the bait, and were shot down to a man. "Atrocious as the deed may seem," says Sir George, "it is difficult to see how, under the circumstances, the obvious trickery of the natives could have been met except by trickery" (p. 38). That is to say, when civilised men come into collision with uncivilised, it is the practice of the latter which is to supply the moral standards for adjusting the quarrel!

It must be said quite firmly that the paragraph quoted above from *The Rise of South Africa* is a conspicuous instance of a

¹*Italics mine.*

²See Prof. Macmillan's "*The Cape Colour Question*" (p. 238). On the whole question of early missionary policy it is gratifying to be able to recommend this able work, the writer of which is Professor of History at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. On the question of Hottentot character and wages Professor Eric Walker observes that "the mass of the Hottentots in 1775 were farm servants, reported to be lazy, improvident and thieving, miserably paid and in some cases not paid at all" ("*A Modern History for South Africans*," pp. 87-8).

one-sided sympathy leading an eminent writer into untruth. Unquestionably when the white man goes pioneering in a country that for ages has been the homeland of black peoples he is bound to have a difficult time. The Dutch farmers at the beginning of the nineteenth century needed all their resources of skill and strength, of tact and wisdom and of generosity too, in their attempts to extract a living from waste lands where wild creatures, both beast and man, roamed without a law save their own unwritten customs and gregarious instincts. We do well to imagine sympathetically the Colonists' precarious footing in that strange country. But the character they revealed¹ shows a lamentable lack of common humanity and, despite a nominal attachment to Christianity, an almost utter absence of any attempt to regulate life by the Golden Rule. Sir George Cory writes clean against the evidence when, in the words quoted above, he ascribes the misfortunes of the Eastern Province to the arrival of Vanderkemp and his successors. These misfortunes were due chiefly to the Boer farmers themselves. In the first place, they were continually pushing into lands which the natives had previously occupied and regarded as their own. By unjust acquisition they provoked all that was worst in the native character, and so brought upon themselves those frequent murderous raids and cattle-liftings which followed the establishment of their homes. "Restore," said a Hottentot chieftain to Sir John Barrow, "the country of which our fathers have been despoiled by the Dutch and we have nothing more to ask. . . . We lived very contentedly before these Dutch plunderers molested us ; and why should we not do so again, if left to ourselves ? Has not the Great Master given plenty of grass, roots, and berries, and grasshoppers for our use, and till the Dutch destroyed them, abundance of wild animals to hunt ? And will they not return and multiply when these destroyers are gone ?"²

In the second place, the Boer farmers of this period seldom displayed better management of the land than the natives themselves. Professor Eric Walker tells us that they "grew but little corn and were content to go without bread, milk,

¹*cf. chapter ten of the present book.*

²*Philip's "Researches in South Africa." Vol. I., p. 83.*

butter and vegetables. Their food was meat. . . . So long as the Boers could get a few luxuries like coffee, brandy, dress-lengths and so on from wandering pedlars or from far distant Cape Town, they asked for nothing more except ammunition from the Company (Dutch East India Company). . . . By 1775 . . . contact with slaves and Hottentot servants had bred slovenly habits.”¹ A Royal Commission of Inquiry into South African affairs in the early years of the nineteenth century reported: “The indolence of the Dutch farmers induced by the employment of slaves in the more cultivated portions of the Colony, and the facility with which they obtain Hottentots in the grazing districts, have proved a great obstacle to the improvement of the Colony.”²

Again, John Campbell, who travelled through all the Eastern Province as well as other parts of South Africa in 1812 and 1813 states: “The Boers in this part of the Colony are never satisfied unless they have twenty or thirty Hottentots running about them. When they happen to have fewer they are full of complaints against Bethelsdorp.”³ They have not employment for more than four or five except at the ploughing and reaping seasons. Hottentots being so easily obtained, is a great injury to the Boer and to them. Many of the Boers have four or five stout sons who in consequence of the crowd of Hottentots about the house, have no occasion to put their hands to any work, wherefore they sit with their legs across, the greater part of the day, or else indulge themselves in sleep. They sometimes bestir themselves to shoot for an hour. In this way their days and years pass on in miserable idleness.”⁴

General Dundas who as head of the Government at Cape Town, during part of our period, toured the Eastern Province, spoke of the Boers as “a troublesome and disaffected race” and “the strangest compound of cowardice and cruelty, of treachery and cunning, and of most of the bad qualities, with few, very few, good ones of the human mind.”⁵ There can be

¹*Op. cit.*, p. 82.

²Quoted by Philip *op. cit.*, I., p. 390.

³*The Missionary Institution. See chapter XV.*

⁴“*Travels in South Africa.*” *Second Edition*, pp. 80-1.

⁵From the Records of the State Office, as quoted by Cory, p. 96.

little doubt that this last indictment of the Colonists owes something to the exasperated state of the Governor's mind, at the time. One would, indeed, be sorry to take it as a judicial verdict. But the point to be noticed is that in the series of facts and opinions we have quoted—and others might be added—there lie clear indications that, apart altogether from the introduction of the missionary influence into the situation, there were causes at work sufficient wellnigh to ruin the hope of a prosperous Colony. To ascribe the misfortunes that befell the Colony after Vanderkemp's appearance upon the scene to his handling of the natives is simply unhistorical. In avoiding Sir George Cory's error, however, one must not be diverted from a just estimate of Vanderkemp's teaching and labours.

We return to his remarkable declaration to Maynier respecting the Hottentot problem. This contained a principle and a proposal. He gave it as his opinion that "the Hottentots should be perfectly free, upon an equal footing in every respect with the Colonists, and by no sort of compulsion brought under a necessity to enter into their service." It has been suggested¹ that in making this great claim Vanderkemp was reproducing the mind of Rousseau, whose influence, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, had a good deal to do with the thinking of people in Holland during Vanderkemp's early life. The point in the suggestion seems to be that Rousseau glorified the natural state of man and idealised the savage as a noble creature demoralised only when he was put into the bonds of civilisation. But Vanderkemp was under no illusion about the natural condition of savages. He compassionated them but never ignored their gross faults and glaring defects. Nor did he share Rousseau's glorification of the "General Will" in the New Social State, which that somewhat inconsistent philosopher desiderated. Both in his Deistic period and after he became a Christian Vanderkemp was an extreme individualist, and this Rousseau was not. In Politics he was an Orangist as long as the Prince of Orange ruled in Holland. When that country became a Republic he declined a lucrative medical position under Government because he was no republican. His sympathies then and later at the Cape were more with

¹*Professor Du Plessis in "A History of Christian Missions," p. 127.*

monarchical England than with his own native land. At the same time he hated oppression. At the root of his nature lay an insistent personalism, a consciousness of power which at times was self-willed and proud, and which led him to view with indignation the ascendancy some men sought to establish over others. When he became a Christian this feeling in part was modified, and in part enhanced. The New Testament rather than Rousseau was the source of his principle of individual liberty. All men alike were sinful creatures needing the Divine grace, and all alike whether black or white were potential children of God and heirs of immortality. From this equality of need and of religious opportunity Vanderkemp advanced to an insistence upon "equal footing in every respect," emphasising especially freedom from compulsion in the matter of labour. It was rather a big leap.

One finds matter both for agreement and for dissent. What is now called the "Colour Bar" is incompatible with the Christian Religion, but on the other hand, when Vanderkemp insisted that Hottentots should be placed upon an equal footing in every respect with the Colonists he was led by his individualism into forgetfulness of the principle of community. The rights of any individual in a civilised state should be regulated by the services he is prepared to render to the state. Vanderkemp never seemed to realise this. His religious experience was at fault. His reading of the Bible was defective, although in this one cannot attribute any blame. He lived before the days of that sound Biblical Criticism which has taught most of us to distinguish the several parts of Scripture in their distinctive meanings. Hence he lost one valuable teaching of Revelation.

An eminent Scots professor of our time once remarked to the present writer: "I always tell my men (in the Divinity classes) that the Old Testament deals with nations, the New Testament with individuals." The aphorism, as he expounded it, is a sound one, needing to be modified perhaps only to this extent, that Dr. Charles has lately claimed for the Apocalypse a communal significance. The Old Testament, rightly read, does set before us the conception of the solidarity of life, the truth that generations are linked one to another, that family

and tribe are unities, the human storehouses of distinctive intellectual and moral qualities, so that men are not to be treated as solitaries but as inevitably bound together in *the bundle of life*, sustaining towards their several communities duties which are commensurate with rights. The Old Testament was much indeed to Vanderkemp, as his Journals so continually reveal, but like most other Christians of his day he treated its words as though they were words of the New Testament, dealing with the sins and sorrows of the individual soul. Had he preached from the Old Testament a doctrine of earthly citizenship as well as the New Testament Gospel of a citizenship in Heaven, he could hardly have insisted that uncivilised men should be placed on an equal footing in every respect with those who were to some extent at least the children of a civilised society.

Our economic and political functions in the State must be adapted to our powers of operating them. Even where through education and religion the members of a race hitherto accounted backward, are clearly being qualified for fuller citizenship, and where equal rights are therefore properly demanded for them, such a term will not necessarily mean the same rights, but rights which give an identical measure of opportunity for further development along distinctively racial lines.

What, however, probably Vanderkemp had most in mind—what he certainly had to fight for—was freedom for the native to choose his own means of livelihood, and, that over black and white there should be the same rule of Justice. Compulsory labour, for the benefit of private individuals, was and is unjust, yet this was involved by the legal system then in force. Again, theft by a black man should not be a capital offence, whilst assault by a white man upon a black is reckoned venial. Yet these things happened repeatedly in Vanderkemp's time.

The Law was unequal. To begin with it permitted Slavery. The trade was abolished in 1807, but slaves were not completely emancipated until 1834. Ryk Tulbagh, who has been spoken of as "the most popular and perhaps the most humane of eighteenth century Governors," issued a code of slave-laws which permitted flogging under a magistrate's order without

trial for quite trivial offences, and punished with death any slave who raised his hand against his master—death in the traditional way—slow strangulation, impaling, or breaking on the wheel in public.¹ These barbaric methods were not discontinued until the time of Vanderkemp's mission. The slaves, of course, must not be identified with any one branch of the African race, but the laws governing their life influenced the attitude of the Colonists towards all black men. Thus it was sometimes quite enough for a Boer farmer to send a Hottentot servant for punishment to the *landdrost*, i.e. local magistrate: the Hottentot was beaten according to his wishes. Where in more serious cases a Hottentot was either a prisoner or a witness in a trial, according to the Dutch law which appears to have persisted after the Colony became English, his oath was inadmissible. If a Hottentot made a complaint against his master he, and not the man accused, was promptly lodged in gaol pending investigation. It has been suggested by one zealous apologist for the Colonial system that there was no real hardship in this latter provision. Their homes were so uncomfortable that "the majority of the Hottentots indeed rather enjoyed prison life than dreaded it."² Really! What remarkable prisons for that period, or else what astonishing natives! But it must have taken much of the gilt off the gingerbread, when the incarcerated Hottentot reflected that if he failed to win his case against his master he would be flogged by order of the court.

The second point in Vanderkemp's declaration to the Commissioner Maynier respecting the Hottentots was that they should have grounds allotted to them by Government for their own independent use. The suggestion was followed up and met with favourable consideration from the Governor, General Dundas, to whom Vanderkemp addressed an important letter, dated November 11th, 1801. I extract the following paragraphs:

"We were witnesses of the deplorable and wretched condition into which the Hottentot nation is sunk for want of

¹ "A Modern History for South Africans," by Eric A. Walker. p. 85.

² Teal's "History" (1795-1834), p. 342.

food, instruction, liberty, useful employments, and a spot which they, under the superintendence of Government, might in some measure call their home.

I am speaking of their condition at Graaf Reinet, the very place to which numbers of them, by the present circumstances, are compelled to repair as to an asylum, where they may be nourished at the expense of Government, while still a greater number prefer to shelter themselves among the Kafirs on this side the Great Fish River against the barbarities of the Colonists. . . . The consequences of such a condition can be no other than idleness, poverty, or enormous expenses to entertain them, an aversion and actual separation from civilised society, vices of every kind, which may end in plundering, murders, and irregularities of a different nature, but all tending to reverse the happiness and usefulness of that nation, and the safety of the Colony.”

After suggesting the foundation of a missionary settlement not far from Algoa Bay and Fort Frederick, if a proper supply of water could be found there (which was doubtful), he proceeds :

“ The chief object and aim of the missionaries ought to be to promote the knowledge of Christ, and the practice of real piety, both by instruction and example, among the Hottentots and other Heathen, who shall be admitted, and formed into a regular Society ; and in the second place, the temporal happiness and usefulness of this Society with respect to the country at large.

The actual admission and expulsion from this Society shall entirely depend upon the judgment of the missionaries, but it seems necessary that of those who shall have lived in the families of Colonists, none shall be considered admissible but such as shall produce a written declaration of their admissibility, signed by the *landdrost* of the district in which they have lived.

As we are of opinion that the rule laid down by Paul : *that if any would not work, neither should he eat*, ought to

be strictly observed in every Christian Society, our intention is to discourage idleness and laziness, and to have the individuals of our institution, as much as circumstances shall admit, employed in different useful occupations, for the cultivation of their rational faculties, or exercise of the body, as means of subsistence, and of promoting the welfare of this Society, and the Colony at large. These occupations may be referred either to agriculture and farming, the management of cattle, or mechanical arts, and little manufactures, e.g., soap-boiling, candle-making, spinning of thread, manufacturing of paper, tanning, potting, brick-making, turnery, etc.”

The inmates were to be paid for their labours, but any profits realised from the sale of products were to be devoted to other missionary settlements. If it should be necessary to expel anyone the *landdrost* would be informed thereof, and if any of the settlers should be accused of crime this also should go before the *landdrost*, so that justice might be done, and no malefactor find a shelter within the institution.

The reply of the Governor was most cordial in its approbation of what, indeed, was, at least on paper, an excellent scheme. One notices that at this stage of his career Vanderkemp expressed more than once a desire to support by his labours the welfare of Hottentots and Colonists alike.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FIRST SETTLEMENT

IN furtherance of the scheme for a missionary settlement amongst Hottentots Mr. Read was sent down to Algoa Bay for consultation with the authorities at Fort Frederick, where an English garrison was stationed. A farm, known as Bota's Place, belonging to the Government, some seven miles west of the fort and three from the coast was offered him, and accepted.

Vanderkemp immediately began to prepare for the journey. It was becoming highly desirable that he should transport his little following of natives from Graaf Reinet as quickly as possible. Every day brought fresh evidence that the insurgency of the farmers was mainly due to their hostility to all missionary work amongst the black peoples. That was and remained the prime source of the criticism poured out upon Vanderkemp and his colleagues. The Government Commission of Enquiry into the conditions of the Hottentots (1828) in its historic survey of the period with which we are concerned, reported :

“ With the exception of a few individuals, who from the influence of good feelings and reflection became sensible of the evils arising from the debasement of the Hottentot character and endeavoured by kindness and good treatment to secure their attachment, and even permitted them to join in their domestic devotion, the inhabitants of the Cape may be considered to have been averse to their receiving moral or religious instruction of any kind.”

We can see motives for this. It was a less disagreeable business to sjambok the Hottentot in his savage and heathen state than thus to “ discipline ” a fellow Christian, for “ Chris-

tians" in some sense the farmers believed themselves to be. Moreover Christianity had a way of opening doors of advancement beyond the herdsman's craft, and if Hottentots failed them, who were to tend their cattle? Considerations like these confirmed the farmers in their feelings that the proceedings of Vanderkemp were to be opposed at all costs. The humane Commissioner Maynier they had removed from their path, and they were resolved that this missionary should go too. Thus the situation at Graaf Reinet grew ever more difficult. Hence Vanderkemp determined to confirm his colleague's acceptance of Bota's Place.

At the time there were about seven hundred Hottentots in Graaf Reinet, all more or less under his instruction. Many of these were in Government employ and could not leave. Others feared to set out owing to persistent rumours that the farmers were preparing to attack the party. But at last about three hundred men, women and children signified their desire to join the expedition. In view of the Boer threats Major Sherlock, the military commander at Graaf Reinet, offered Vanderkemp an escort of dragoons, but this was declined.

Early in March (1802) under cover of darkness, Vanderkemp led out his little company from Graaf Reinet to begin their journey of a hundred and sixty miles. A solitary waggon carrying some few of the mothers and babies, oxen laden with baggage, a flock of sheep provided by the Governor, troops of nearly naked black people, slowly debouched upon the wilderness-tracks in quest of a promised land. Day and night passed in the varied incidents of trekking. Numbers fell off from the adventure through fear and through that tendency to vagrant and uncontrolled living which was inherent in the Hottentot disposition. Sometimes out of the woods came other wild men glad to take the deserters' places. Every night the talk at the camp-fires was full of the cruelty of the Colonists. They spoke to one another, not so much in anger as in hatred and fear, for the Hottentot was not by nature so high-spirited as the Kafir. He dreaded the white man, and postponed revenge until the convenient opportunity. At last, on March 7th, Vanderkemp and his little Israel of the Exodus reached the appointed place of refuge and on numbering them he found just one

hundred and sixty persons. Three primitive houses already existed which Vanderkemp made into headquarters for school, church, and printing office. Then he divided out the land amongst his followers, giving to every family sufficient for a house and garden. Every morning and evening the company assembled for worship. Twice a day reading and writing classes were held. The printing press got to work and produced South Africa's first book¹—a spelling book containing 3,138 monosyllables. On Sundays Vanderkemp preached once and on Wednesdays and Saturdays he catechised.

Unhappily this brave start was almost immediately followed by an epidemic due to the bad water-supply. Vanderkemp himself was prostrated with ague and this was followed by acute rheumatism which the natives called a "lame sickness", so that for several months he had to be content to serve the mission from his sick bed. The bulk of the work necessarily fell upon Mr. Read.

The settlement at Bota's Place lasted only seven months. A sea of clashing currents surged around it. There was a certain Hottentot chief—Klaas Stuurman, who had given the authorities trouble, though not openly hostile. At the Governor's request Vanderkemp, on his way from Graaf Reinet, had visited this man, tendering and receiving assurances of goodwill. This, however, led to fresh difficulties. Vanderkemp writes :

"Klaas declared himself inclined to turn his eyes away from all hostilities, and accept of the offer of some advantages promised him by Government. This displeased some other chiefs of the plundering Hottentots so much, that they not only attacked Klaas, took away his people, cattle and arms, but also threatened to treat us in the same manner, looking upon us as the cause of the resolution which he had taken. Stuurman, to save his life, fled to T. Conga, chief of a troop of Kafirs on this side the Fish River, who caused us to be informed, that he approved of the behaviour of Klaas, and had taken him under his protection. In the meanwhile the Governor had

¹ "The Times" Empire Press Number : 31st May, 1930.

caused a strong detachment of Colonists commanded by the famous Tjaard Vander Wolt, to be marched into this region against the plundering Kafirs and Hottentots, after he had issued a proclamation, that those who would leave the plundering tribes, and go to Graaf Reinet, Fort Frederick,¹ or into our Institution, should have freedom and protection. This detachment, however, attacked promiscuously the Kafirs and Hottentots on this side the Great Fish River. Looking upon this as pernicious to the rest of the Colony, I gave my sentiments upon it with boldness ; and wrote as well to the Governor Dundas, as to the Fiscal Van Ryneveld, that according to our opinion, if the detachment proceeded in this manner, and were not recalled in time, it would occasion its own destruction, and that of all the Colony. I urged also that Klaas Stuurman and his people might be protected, and that the promises made to him in the name of Government might be fulfilled. But it appeared from the answers which I received that the Governor was prejudiced against Stuurman by his enemies, and suspected him of falsehood and fraud. Our Institution making us an object of the hatred of the Colonists, we also were described by them as men who stood with the plundering Hottentots and Kafirs in a connection which was dangerous to the good inhabitants, and that we caused our Institution to be a place of refuge for robbers and murderers. The truth was, that we never had had a connection with any of the plundering troops ; but that we took into our Institution those who separated themselves from these troops and came daily to us to hear the word of God, and to conduct themselves peaceably according to our rules. The consequence of this, however, was that we received on the 3rd of August from Government an order whereby we were prohibited from receiving more Hottentots, or entering into any connection with the tribes at the Sunday river. By this order we were, to our great sorrow, forced to refuse many of these unfortunate people, principally women and children, who nevertheless rather chose to

¹*At Algoa Bay, i.e., Port Elizabeth.*

maintain themselves in the woods amongst the brutes, than to return to their tribes.”

What a picture ! Black man against black in dispute over their right relations to the white—white men armed with better weapons of precision than the natives could handle, attacking and shooting down indiscriminately men of the opposite colour on mere suspicion—women and children in scanty native clothing, sheltering themselves from the hideous conflict in woods where leopards, lions and venomous snakes had their haunts—day and night following each other with their wonderful and benignant splendour—and one little place of refuge, shut against the many, harbouring a few hundred uncivilised human beings, to whose wondering minds new and strange things about themselves and the world, the future and God are being told by two white men !

The end of Commander Vander Wolt and his indiscriminating detachment came soon, as Vanderkemp had foretold. Defeated by the Kafirs and hurled back across the Gamtos River the little force dispersed, leaving its commander dead.

It was the year of the Peace of Amiens, by the provisions of which Cape Colony was handed back to the Dutch. The Governor's hands were full, but he contrived to send the missionaries abundant supplies of food and of grain for sowing, and the necessary tools both for building and for agriculture. He followed this up by visiting the Institution. The garrison was being withdrawn from Fort Frederick, Algoa Bay, and that place was offered to Vanderkemp as a safer headquarters for his work than Bota's Place. This offer he declined but reserved the option of retreat thither in the event of hostilities being directed against himself and his followers.

“The General (Governor Dundas) who regarded us almost as dead men, if we did not accept of his offer, proposed to us, as a last remedy for our preservation, to sail with him to the Cape, and to defer the instruction of the Hottentots in this region, till more favourable circumstances should offer themselves. To this I answered that I hoped to remain faithful to the calling to which God had called me ; that even if I knew,

that I could save my life by leaving them, I should not fear to offer it for the least child among them."

Mr. Read spoke to the same effect. Whereupon the Governor desisted but arranged for a very handsome gift of cattle, sheep, waggons, food and other articles to be sent to the Institution. He then returned to Cape Town by ship, the English garrison going too.

Except for Bota's Place and Fort Frederick, under the shadow of which a few Colonists were huddled together, the land was now given over to savagery. Every day the little missionary settlement looked for a storm to break upon it, as a mariner looks for the dense purple-black cloud of a tropical sky to burst upon his ship. About eight days after the departure of the English garrison, at midnight, the storm came. The stillness of the settlement was broken with sudden yells and the firing of guns. Instantly the whole place was in uproar. The cattle bellowed under the lash of invaders' whips. Women shrieked and there was the sound of children's frightened crying. Vanderkemp and Read went out into the darkness hoping to win over the enemy with friendly words, but were met only with musket balls. Then one of the natives belonging to the Institution tried to make peace. A voice was heard from the enemy: "Look—there comes a peace-maker—kill him, shoot him," and the poor fellow was compelled to retire with a bullet in his leg. After the Kafir fashion, the enemy now made some of the captive cattle into a screen and advanced against the houses, shooting all the time. But the beasts encountering a pile of planks that had been left in the way between the houses, suddenly lurched to one side, and made off, leaving the invaders open to attack. There was just light enough for the defenders to see what was happening and they fired twice, fatally injuring the chief of the troop—one Andries Stuurman, brother of Klaas Stuurman, whereupon his followers fled.

The attack was renewed without success the next night. Then two days later at dawn a yet larger body of Hottentots and Kafirs swooped down upon the settlement. Fierce fighting ensued; and again the enemy were driven off.

In all this the rule of the two missionaries had been that

firing was only to be allowed in self-defence. Neither of them appears to have handled any arms, though Vanderkemp must have found it rather a strain upon his natural disposition not to prosecute the conflict more aggressively. Knowing his own heart so well he was quick to recognise the development of the fighting spirit in his followers. They showed, he says, "that they had obtained a certain pleasure in fighting." He saw too that the situation had arisen which the Governor had predicted, and that larger bodies of savages would be sure to return to the onset. So with the assent of his followers a removal was made the next day to Fort Frederick. Some of the Colonists from that place came out in a friendly way to help as an escort, hoping that, now the missionaries had had a taste of what Hottentots and Kafirs could be and do, they would make common cause with themselves in opposing them. In this they were speedily undeceived. Shortly after, all the houses at Bota's Place were burned down by a party of farmers—presumably as a deterrent against future missionary operations there.

The devotional and educational work was continued at Fort Frederick but other enterprises naturally lagged. Thus that year of its establishment, 1802, found the Hottentot Mission crippled and homeless, but with its flag still flying and its leader, despite the "lame sickness," keen upon the coming of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of the black people to whom he had been sent.

CHAPTER XV

BETHELSDORP

ALTHOUGH the Colonists at Algoa Bay had assisted the missionaries in their removal from Bota's Place, when they learnt the intention of the latter to continue their work elsewhere, they resumed their opposition. Mission children were kidnapped and sent to remote parts of the country. The natives who attended the services were seduced into drunkenness and sensual sin. The purposes and principles of the missionaries were misrepresented and their doctrines denied. Friendly Hottentots, too, frequently brought to Vanderkemp stories of murders of natives by white men, possibly not always true stories, but sufficiently emphatic to suggest the proverb where there is smoke there is some fire. It became clear that Algoa Bay was as hostile to all missionary work as Graaf Reinet had been.

Perplexed and distressed, Vanderkemp turned to the Dutch Governor, Lieutenant-General Jan Willem Janssens, who shortly after his arrival at Cape Town came on a visit of inspection to Fort Frederick. The Governor's mind had been already perverted by the enemies of the mission, but a frank talk between himself and Vanderkemp sufficed to clear away the obstructing falsehood ; official sanction was given for the continuance of the mission. The problem was, however, where to go. After some discussion a stretch of territory about ten miles in circumference, situated seven miles north of Fort Frederick, near a small river, was offered. Vanderkemp accepted this and at the Governor's request chose a name for it—Bethelsdorp. On the second of June (1803) he took possession there with all his people.

Bethelsdorp is associated with fierce controversies, and the early history of the Institution which Vanderkemp there created is full of disappointment, although the work he began

continues to this day and is commemorated by the Vanderkemp Memorial Church.

In one respect all who have visited the site, whether friend or foe, are agreed. "No place," says the Government Commission of Enquiry (1828) "could have been selected that was more unfavourable to the industry of a numerous body of labourers than the village of Bethelsdorp." The land was sterile, and the water was brackish. The only natural vegetation was bush. It was a difficult place for arable work, except in the hands of a scientifically trained community. Vanderkemp himself had doubts about the site before he went there. Why, then, it may be asked, did he go?

His reasons are, I think, fairly clear. In the first place, as already indicated, Colonial opposition compelled him to put some distance between his Hottentots and any considerable white settlement. Secondly, it was equally desirable that this distance should not be too great for Government military support in case of further native attacks. Finally, it was almost a case of "Hobson's choice"; all the best of the land was already claimed by either the farmers or the roving Kafir herdsmen, sometimes indeed, by both.

None the less is it true that the selection of this place in view of the general character of the people who were to live there was peculiarly unfortunate. The missionaries were under no illusions as to the indolence of the Hottentot disposition. The Hottentot of those days was one who could have entered into the modern sentiment expressed by Mr. W. H. Davies:

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare,
No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows?

The Hottentot was lazy. Now laziness is a matter of standards and of resources. What in Lancashire is called "house-pride" involves great toil. To have imposed such a standard upon a Hottentot perhaps would not have been to offer him the best fruits of civilisation. Indeed, we post-Victorians are beginning to have doubts about the value of it

ourselves. We are growing eager to simplify the machinery of daily life and to reduce necessities. But Victorians and, earlier, the Hanoverians, were extraordinarily insistent upon a complicated way of living. It was one of the criticisms directed against Vanderkemp—and almost everything he did was criticised—that he commonly went about without a hat and wore no stockings. By such critics the Hottentot was, of course, despised for his contentment with barbaric simplicity.

In the matter of resources, competent observers of the Hottentot people have indicated their small capacity for strenuous labour. Thus the 1828 Commission reported: "Although they are not found to want intelligence and address, their physical strength, habits and constitution, do not qualify them for the heavier description of work."

Indolence, however excused, inevitably involves temptation. If one has little inclination to work he is likely to covet the fruits of other men's labours. The Hottentot was often a thief. Now thieving is due to an inadequate recognition of proprietary rights. Here again the Hottentot mentality led the way into temptation. He was accustomed to share freely with his friends, and indeed with all his neighbours, whatever good luck brought him. If he joined a hunting party and was the only fortunate one of the group, he would readily admit all his companions to an equal partnership in the ensuing feast. This was not generosity. It was communal practice. And so when he and his family were half starving, to help himself from a Boer farmer created little trouble of conscience, only probably a fear of punishment upon detection.

Inherent laziness often goes with sensuality and levity in marriage. The Hottentot caused the missionaries acute distress by his moral instability. This, perhaps, may be regarded as the defect of his quality. To quote again from the Royal Commission of 1828: "In his natural disposition, the Hottentot is mild, placable and ingenuous, hospitable, lavish of his present stores, and careless in making provision for the future."

In view of all these considerations it will be agreed that the Bethelsdorp experiment was sufficiently adventurous.

The first undertaking of the adventurers was ploughing and sowing. The Boer farmers had refused to sell them any grain,

but the Governor sent them a consignment of seventy sacks to be paid for at cost price. So they got to work without a day's delay, the season being advanced. Partly, perhaps, because of this latter fact, partly because of the barrenness of the ground, when they came to reap, their harvest was pitifully scant.

The natives speedily set up their flimsy reed houses. In the centre of the settlement under the missionaries' direction a temporary Church was erected of the same materials. It took the form of a cross, the central area being the church proper, Vanderkemp's two rooms occupying one end of the cross, and Read's rooms the opposite end. A common dining-room and kitchen were added as an annexe to one of the households.

Trees were planted—fig, peach, pomegranate. And Mr. Read busied himself with laying out a big vegetable garden. Mr. Read had now family responsibilities, as we learn from a quaint passage in one of Vanderkemp's letters to the directors, dated 23rd April, 1803 :

“ If marrying to a rich wife can act as a temptation for proving unfaithful to our calling, then my dear Brother Read will, as I hope, by the grace of God be preserved from it ; he has fixed his choice on a young Hottentot girl, the inventory of whose earthly possessions is two sheep skins and a string of beads to ornament her body ; but she has, as I hope, found a riches in Christ which neither she nor I are able to pronounce.”

With the inevitable practical labours of the settlement, services of instruction and of public worship went on daily. The actual number of converts at this time was about twenty, though only three men and three women had been baptised and admitted to the Communion of the Lord's Supper. The latter Sacrament was kept after the manner of the Apostolic Church, i.e. as a Supper preceded by a love-feast.

From the records of the mission a glimpse of the infant church opens to our minds. It is night. Evening worship has already been held, attended by some hundred of the natives, who have now dispersed to their several huts. The noises of the camp die away. Outside this church of rushes, through

which the rains often pelt and the night air flows coolly, all is still. Scarcely any sound of wandering beast is heard, for here are no woods or ravines, but arid plains dominated by a range of hills that rise against the wonderfully lighted sky like a section of the Atlantic Ocean in storm-swell fixed for evermore. It is a bare land, and there is barrenness within that holy place where the Lord's Supper is laid. A rude table covered with a simple white cloth, upon which stand two lighted candles, two earthenware cups and a plate containing, in place of bread—no bread has been tasted in Bethelsdorp for months past—a preparation of dried pears beaten into the form of a cake—these constitute the means of grace for the Bethelsdorp church. The Agapé is over, the simple meal to which each has brought his own contribution, and during which Vanderkemp and his colleague have conversed freely and informally with their fellow members, always leading on the conversation towards the goal of the evening's engagement—the mystery and redeeming grace of the Lord's passion. And now the little congregation is seated upon the floor. Brother Read—like the early Franciscans, the missionaries always use the fraternal designation for each other, excepting that sometimes Read will speak of his colleague as “my father Vanderkemp”—Brother Read, newly-wed, sits with his black wife arrayed in the better of her two sheep-skins and her necklace of beads. With her are some four or five others of the natives. Their black skins reflect little of the dim light of the place, but there is light in their eyes which by nature are beautiful as a cow's eyes, and by grace are lustrous with the gratitude of the Lord's redeemed. The gaunt figure of Vanderkemp casts vague shadows upon the walls of grass as, bare-footed, he moves from one to another, handing morsels of that poor substitute for bread, and the cup of wine. He himself partakes, remembering perhaps that strange Communion at Dordrecht twelve years before, when, amidst his deep sorrow, the Lord was first manifested to him, remembering too the great Supper in London with like-minded men, his valediction from the Church in Christendom. All his heart and memory are charged with the riches of learning and of meditation in the deep things of God. A man of noble intellect and honour and love, yet he will now

take the cup as it passes from the lips of these poor ignorant Africans—ignorant indeed in human culture, but scholars of Christ, and he will drink with them because he is one with them in that final unity which knows neither Greek nor barbarian, neither bond nor free, neither black nor white ; the humanity of the Son of Man, Child and King of the Race. The hills outside are bare, the plain is bare, the houses of the folk are bare, the place of worship is bare, but the Holy Catholic Church is here in all the opulence of the Spirit, keeping the memory of her Lord and receiving from Him the grace that up-builds men into eternal life.

Since it is in the light of the Holy Supper that we can best understand the matter, here will be a convenient place for some comment upon the marriages of missionaries with women of another race and colour. In this Mr. Read led the way, being followed shortly afterwards by some others of the South African Mission staff. Their action has been contemptuously condemned by the opponents of missions, whilst even so good a friend as Professor Du Plessis observes that by this action the missionaries “at once put themselves out of sympathy with, and in direct opposition to, the Dutch Colonists, to whom such matrimonial alliances were to the last degree distasteful.”¹ Upon which judgment one is moved to inquire whether all the half-breeds of South Africa are descendants of these few missionaries ? Moreover Professor Du Plessis is himself witness that the opinion of the religiously minded Colonists had not always been averse to mixed marriages. In an earlier and more honourable period of the Colony’s history, inter-marrying with the natives was well respected. “The sole bar to inter-marriage,” says the Professor, “was the question of religion, and when by open profession of faith, this was removed, white and black were held to stand upon the same level. . . . In those early days the distinction between a white skin and a black was but lightly regarded.”² That was precisely the position which Vanderkemp and Read occupied. These black women, who through them had received the right to become children of God, were already sharers in a life far higher and

¹“*A History of Christian Missions in South Africa*,” (p. 118).

²*Op. cit.* pp. 32 and 36.

nobler than that of white women who did not know the Lord. The world might have thought more tolerantly of Mr. Read if he had wooed and won some gay fashionable English or Dutch girl in "little Paris" (Cape Town) but the Christian conscience would have held in that case that he infringed the Apostolic counsel : *Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers*. On the other hand, the Christian Religion knows no colour-bar whatsoever. The position has been stated recently by a well-known Anglo-Catholic writer, who characteristically sees the question as we have approached it, in the light of the Supper of the Lord : " I have knelt at the altar rail while a black priest celebrated the Holy Mysteries. What preposterous insolence it would be for me to be indignant if a white woman chose a black man for her husband."¹

From the Christian standpoint there is no ground whatsoever for objection to marriages of opposite colour. At the same time marriage is always an adventure. The evangelical doctrine of Regeneration, clearly taught in the New Testament, does not involve a repudiation of national, or even of class, distinctions. There is a continuity of mental and temperamental quality in those who most truly are born again. We do well to remember that fact when contemplating marriage even within the Church. Physical factors also demand recognition. I conclude that no stain rests upon the characters of these early South African missionaries who wedded with black women ; as to their wisdom each case has to be judged upon its merits in precisely the same way as we account all other brides and bridegrooms wise or foolish.

¹Mr. Sidney Dark : " *Review of the Churches*," July 1930, p. 436.

CHAPTER XVI

BETHELSDORP SEEN FROM WITHOUT AND FROM WITHIN

BY the treaty of Amiens in 1802, Cape Colony was restored to Holland. As soon as General Janssens, its first Governor, had taken over the administration of affairs, he proceeded upon a tour of the Eastern Province, and in due time reached Algoa Bay and Bethelsdorp. With him was the Commissary-General, De Mist, and as medical adviser, Dr. Henry Lichtenstein, a German naturalist, twenty-three years of age. At twenty-three one usually has decided opinions even upon matters of some complexity, and the management of affairs by older men is too big a target to be passed by. During his tour with the Governor, Dr. Lichtenstein expressed himself very freely upon what he called "the invasion of a swarm of missionaries" in various parts of the Colony. Subsequently he recorded his impressions of Vanderkemp and of Bethelsdorp in a work entitled *Travels in South Africa*. Lichtenstein belonged to that type of scientific traveller who, in observing Christian Missions and their methods, considers it superfluous to study them with the care he would feel to be imperative when investigating the habits of beetles and of ants. It is not therefore wilful falsehood with which we charge him in respect to certain of his statements about Bethelsdorp, but simply inaccuracy of observation arising from the self-sufficiency of a young man in a hurry. It is, however, surprising that responsible modern writers like Sir George Cory, in his *Rise of South Africa* should have quoted so much of Lichtenstein's report about Bethelsdorp as though it possessed any evidential value. Dr. Theal's *History of South Africa* (1795-1834) also apparently bases its account of Bethelsdorp upon Lichtenstein's report and contains the statement: "The missionaries themselves were so much occupied with teaching religious truths that they entirely neglected temporal matters."

(p. 91.) This is absolutely untrue. Dr. Theal has been misled by Lichtenstein, nearly all of whose statements about Dr. Vanderkemp's early life are inaccurate.¹

The carelessness of Lichtenstein in these matters should have warned Sir George Cory that he was dealing with a writer whose statements about affairs of Bethelsdorp could not be accepted without thorough corroboration. Nevertheless, a certain artistic value attaches to Lichtenstein's picture of the place and of the man who lived there. Through his sketch we are able to see Vanderkemp, not only as he appeared to this somewhat overweening youth, but as he appeared to many white people in South Africa. The elements of untruth in the picture of Bethelsdorp will become clear when, having seen the place as it appeared to a typically sceptical mind, we look at it from within through explicit records.

At this very time there were hovering about the borders a number of vagrant Hottentots, who, during the war, had gained their living as partisans of either side; one while among the Caffres, plundering the dwellings of the Colonists, then assisting the Colonists in seizing the cattle of the Caffres: in this way they had, in more than one instance, been secretly the occasion of the struggle being carried on with still increasing animosity. These people were collected together by Vanderkemp for the purpose of instructing them in the Christian religion, in which he was assisted by an Englishman of the name of Read. But, however plausible and meritorious appeared the plan of the undertaking, the utility which might have been, and ought to have been, derived from it, was lost by the overpious spirit and proud humility of its head. It is true

¹Here are examples. He was "now nearly seventy years of age" (he was fifty-six). "In crossing the River Maas with his wife and children the boat unfortunately overset and all his family was lost." (He was not attempting to cross the river and at that time he had only one child.) He was "ordained at Oxford" (No—in London). In a footnote Lichtenstein says he was informed that "in the year 1807 the old Vanderkemp, following his colleague's example, had married a young Hottentot girl about thirteen, whose freedom, with that of her mother, he had purchased, not, however, living with her formally as his wife." Here the date is wrong, the nationality of the girl is wrong, the age is wrong, and the last statement is wrong, for by the marriage in question several children were born to him. The real facts will be given in Chapter XVIII.

that these Hottentots were now nominally quiet, and kept in some order ; yet, often under pretence of the chase, they wandered about armed, the government (then English) having allowed them, not merely a small quantity of powder and shot to kill game for the purposes of food, but having supplied them with it very abundantly ; a favour, if favour it is to be called which was too often misused. They were certainly daily instructed for some hours in the Christian religion, but these instructions made much more impression upon their memory than upon their understanding. They could sing and pray, and be heartily penitent for their sins, and talk of the Lamb of Atonement, but none were really the better for all this specious appearance. No attention was paid to giving them proper occupations, and, excepting in the hours of prayer, they might be as indolent as they chose. This convenient mode of getting themselves fed attracted many of the worthless and idle among these people, and all who applied were indiscriminately received into the establishment : the consequence was that the Colonists soon made heavy complaints of the want of servants, since the Hottentots were much better pleased with leading an indolent life in Vanderkemp's school than with gaining their bread by labour.

* * * *

On the day of our arrival at Algoa Bay the Commissary-General received a visit from Vanderkemp. In the very hottest part of the morning we saw a waggon, such as is used in husbandry, drawn by four meagre oxen coming slowly along the sandy downs. Vanderkemp sat upon a plank laid across it, without a hat, his venerable bald head exposed to the burning rays of the sun. He was dressed in a threadbare black coat, waistcoat and breeches, without shirt, neckcloth, or stockings, and leather sandals, bound upon his feet, the same as are worn by the Hottentots. The Commissary-General hastened to meet and receive him with the utmost kindness ; he descended from his car, and approached with slow and measured steps, presenting to our view a tall, meagre, yet venerable figure.

In his serene countenance might be traced remains of former beauty, and in his eye, still full of fire, was plainly to be discerned the powers of mind which had distinguished his early years. Instead of the usual salutations, he uttered a short prayer, in which he begged a blessing upon our Chief and his company, and the protection of Heaven during the remainder of our journey. He then accompanied us into the house, where he entered into conversation freely upon many subjects, without any superciliousness or affected solemnity.

The Commissary-General reminded him that they had known each other thirty-six years before at Leyden ; he was then himself studying the law, and Vanderkemp was in garrison as a lieutenant of dragoons. He named to him the coffee-house where they had often met, and talked over many occurrences that had happened jointly to them. The missionary remembered these things very distinctly, observing that he led then a very dissolute life, but he hoped it was expiated by his subsequent conversion and present course. He related many things worthy of remark during the time that he had lived among the Caffres, and elucidated several circumstances that happened in the late unfortunate war with them. Before we sat down to table he again ejaculated a long prayer ; he ate very little, drank no wine, had after dinner a private conference with the Commissary-General, and returned in the evening to Bethelsdorp.

* * * *

Two days after we returned Vanderkemp's visit. It is scarcely possible to describe the wretched condition in which this establishment appeared to us, especially after having seen that at Bavianskloof. On a wide plain, without a tree, almost without water fit to drink, are scattered forty or fifty little huts in the form of hemispheres, but so low that a man cannot stand upright in them. In the midst is a small clay-hut thatched with straw, which goes by the name of a church, and close by, some smaller huts of the same materials for the missionaries. All are so wretchedly built, and are kept with so

little care and attention, that they have a perfectly ruinous appearance. For a great way round, not a bush to be seen, for what there might have been originally, have long ago been used for firewood : the ground all about is perfectly naked, and hard trodden down, nowhere the least trace of human industry wherever the eye is cast, nothing is presented but lean, ragged, or naked figures, with indolent sleepy countenances. The support of the missionary institutions in England and Holland, the favour of the government, the chase, and the keeping a few cattle, the produce of which is scarcely worth mentioning—these are the means to which two hundred and fifty men have to look for their support.

It cannot be matter of astonishment to anybody that they are found wholly insufficient, and Vanderkemp complained bitterly that he had already been forced to sacrifice the greater part of his own property. So much the more extraordinary does it appear, that he had never turned his thoughts seriously to instilling habits of industry into his disciples ; but all idea of their temporary welfare appears with him to be wholly lost in his anxiety for their eternal salvation. His own hut is entirely destitute of all comfort, even of any approach to neatness, and is perfectly consistent with the negligence of earthly cares which he preaches. He remarked, not without great self-satisfaction, how little was necessary to the support of life, but he would surely have done much better when he drew these Hottentots around him, to have inspired them with some sort of taste for the refinement of civilisation, rather than to have levelled himself with them, and adopted their habits of negligence and filth. It appears to me that Vanderkemp is of little value as a missionary, partly because he is a mere enthusiast, and too much absorbed in the idea of conversion, partly because he is too learned, that is to say, too little acquainted with the common concerns, to turn the attention of even a raw Hottentot to them. Thence comes his total neglect of husbandry and all mechanical employments, though these are the arts in which his disciples must be instructed if he

would make them really happy ; thence also the perverted view he takes of the conduct which the Colonists ought to observe with regard to his institution, since he considers them as bound to assist in its support.¹

The day when the Governor and his party visited Bethelsdorp was one of those cloudless days that illustrate a line in Shakespeare :

The gaudy, blabbing and remorseless day—

—flaming sunshine that lights up every detail of the landscape, heat that bites and bites again, from which most men wisely take what shelter they can. Bethelsdorp seen in such a glare would have suggested to any careful student of human nature the tremendous difficulties involved in the agricultural training of a somewhat indolent and savage race. These difficulties have already been indicated ; the measures in which they were surmounted will be shown presently. So far as Lichtenstein's criticism of Vanderkemp's habit of living in this unlovely region is concerned :

The ancient proverb will be well effected—
A staff is quickly found to beat a dog.

To-day if the critic happens to visit some Indian town or village and in the cool of the evening sees a Christian missionary dressed in flannels for a game of tennis, he will immediately publish abroad the comfortable life of missionaries and contrast them unfavourably with the Indian fakir. On the other hand, Vanderkemp was censured, not only by Lichtenstein, but by other Europeans of his time—and the criticism still has vogue—because he chose to share the Hottentot's manner of living and was content with a reed hut measuring only eight feet square. *Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? They are like unto children that sit in the market-place, and call one to another ; which say, We piped unto you and ye did not dance ; we wailed and ye did not weep.* To minds more open to spiritual values

¹"*Travels in Southern Africa in the Years 1803-6,*" by Henry Lichtenstein, Professor of Natural History, Berlin, translated by Anne Plumptre. 1812.

there is a splendour in Vanderkemp's life at Bethelsdorp like the self-emptying of our Lord. He counted it not a prize to live as other cultivated men of his nation did, in the pleasantness of a trim and convenient Dutch home, with a garden of delightful blooms and shady seats, with servants to do for him all lowly tasks, and with daily opportunities for the researches he loved in science and in literature ; but laying aside these things, and unsalaried by the mission he served, subsisting entirely on his own small fortune, he chose to share the poor food and the mean shelter of a savage people, enduring the hardships of heat and cold as best he might, in the hope that by living with them, by teaching and by showing, he might array their souls in the vestures of immortality. There are deeds men do which, though obviously futile in practical outcome, we account it a kind of blasphemy to criticise. At most we say: *C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre*. Had the institution of Bethelsdorp been the squalid failure its critics averred, Vanderkemp's life there would yet have had its place amongst the heroic episodes of the Christian Church.

But it is time to examine the records and see with unprejudiced eyes the real state of affairs at Betheldsorp during the years in which Vanderkemp was its responsible head.

The organisation of the life of the natives who settled with him was attended from the first with great difficulties. The condition of the world at that time was such that the very carrying on of a mission to the heathen resembled the attempt to keep a tradesman's shop going as usual whilst a fire is burning down adjacent premises and the whole place is being hosed with water. In his original proposal to Governor Dundas, Vanderkemp had adopted for his followers St. Paul's precept, *If any man will not work neither shall he eat*. Bethelsdorp was intended to be an industrial institution, self-supporting and possibly profit-making in the interests of missionary work elsewhere. Capital was required for this. Unhappily, for some considerable time no money was available. Communications with England were slow and hazardous. Letters and consignments of tools and apparatus went astray, either being lost at sea or pilfered on the journey from Cape Town. In their report for 1803 Vanderkemp and Read state :

Laziness is the most prevalent evil among our people, which exposes them to the greatest distresses. Some, however, are willing to work if we could employ them ; this we cannot do, not having been able for more than a year to get any money from the Cape, so that we cannot pay them for their labour, which circumstance subjects both them and us to many inconveniences.

By the second year the money difficulty had been surmounted. The Dutch official Commissary-General De Mist conveyed to Vanderkemp a gift of 250 rix dollars (£62) from the Governor and himself. A remittance of £500 from the London Society also came to hand. Work on the land was now carried on, but rather hopelessly, owing to its natural barrenness and the scarcity of water. In 1810 a new source of water was discovered, from which much was anticipated. It does not appear, however, to have realised expectations and the water difficulty became chronic. Herds of cattle and sheep were slowly increased, and in July 1806 the Government granted an additional piece of land more suitable for grazing. Other industries were introduced as time went by—lime-burning, charcoal-burning, soap-boiling, fishing, smith's work, the repairing of waggons and turning. Subsequently a considerable traffic in salt was established. A salt pan two miles in length and about four in circumference yielded large quantities of the mineral. The salt was sold to farmers for manure, or conveyed to Port Elizabeth and exported. A traveller who visited Bethelsdorp about the middle of the century reports that some ten thousand bushels of salt, valued at £400, had been produced in the five months preceding his arrival there.¹ Women found employment in making mats and baskets.

The payment of natives in Vanderkemp's day was at the rate of sixpence a day and three pounds of meat. In the year immediately following Vanderkemp's death, with a population of 1,150 persons dwelling in about 140 houses, Bethelsdorp owned 2,206 black cattle, 1,227 sheep and goats, 17 horses, a plentiful supply of pigs and very numerous poultry, whilst some twenty of the inhabitants possessed waggons and laboured as carriers in the district.

¹"*A Tour in South Africa*," by J. J. Freeman, p. 96.

Work amongst the children was carried on with difficulty, largely owing to the frequent removals of their parents. When these latter obtained work on any of the Boer farms the children had to go with them. Progress in the school would have been greater, perhaps, if Vanderkemp and his colleague had employed either stricter or more engaging methods. From all accounts they seem to have anticipated something of the principle of Madame Montessori, without, however, being able to allure their pupils to the delights of knowledge.

One very popular and quite remunerative branch of juvenile education was begun in 1805 by Mrs. Matthilde Smith, a lady of whom more will be said later. She joined the mission for a period of about two years and taught the women and girls knitting. In the report for 1809 we read: "The call for stockings and nightcaps is more than we can supply, especially of short stockings, or socks, to which the officers in military service are very partial."

Such, in brief, were the occupations to which the Hottentots at Bethelsdorp were introduced by Vanderkemp and his colleagues. Although the original hope of making the institution not merely self-supporting, but financially profitable for missionary work generally, was not realised, at least in Vanderkemp's day, and whilst the missionaries were often discouraged by the moral instability of the workers, yet there was sufficient success to show how variously and earnestly the mission endeavoured to carry out the policy Vanderkemp had laid down at the first. It is enough to prove how completely mistaken—let us charitably put it like that—was Lichtenstein when he said: "Vanderkemp had not turned his thoughts seriously to instilling habits of industry into his disciples, all idea of their temporal welfare being lost in his anxiety for their salvation."

One condition of the life at Bethelsdorp was the uncertainty its founders felt about its permanency. The question of removal to a more fertile locality was continually in their minds, and was repeatedly discussed with the authorities in Cape Town. This necessarily affected the question of house building. It did not seem wise to expend much labour or money—and they had little indeed of the latter—upon the

erection of substantial buildings if the mission was to be transferred elsewhere. Thus the little flimsy church of reeds had to content them until 1809 when, one dark, windy and rainy night, whilst Divine Worship was being held, it partially collapsed. No one appears to have been injured by this disaster, and it led at once to the erection of a more substantial edifice.

Day by day at sunrise the Church-bell summoned the folk to prayer and scripture-reading with exposition. Curfew rang at night for similar devotions. The Old Testament was read in the morning, to quicken and brace all for duty. When they gathered again as the sun went down behind the mountains, and every heart was conscious of something attempted, something done, or, it might be, was oppressed with the sense of something neglected, something that should not have been done, it was a chapter from the New Testament, with its severer standards of right, and its more gentle diffusion of God's loving-kindness that was read and expounded.

Catechising services, both for children and adults, were conducted by Vanderkemp every Wednesday morning and Saturday afternoon, a Catechism entitled "Principles of the Word of God for the Hottentot Mission" being printed at the mission press in 1804.

Sunday brought the people together for fuller worship. Naturally fond of melody, they readily learnt Christian hymns. The soft voices of the women mingled with the richer voices of the men wrought in all alike vivid emotions. The sternness of life, the hard conditions of labour under a foreign dominion from the extremest forms of which many had fled, the pathos of home love and parenthood, sickness and death, and withal that sense of individual insufficiency which is natural to a not very robust race, prepared them for the Christian message, so that often during the preaching, especially during the very human preaching of Brother Read, there would be a sound of tears that grew into loud crying, drowning the preacher's voice. As converts were made, the African gift of utterance was utilised, and native preachers took their turn with the Europeans, speaking at such length, too, that when in the year 1809 the sermon had grown to the duration of two hours, a

limit had to be imposed and the daily exposition confined within half an hour and no more than one hour allowed on Sundays. "This," says the report, "we find more pleasant and not less profitable."

The mission staff was increased in 1805 by the arrival of J. G. Ullbricht and Bastian Tromp with his wife, and in 1807 by Erasmus Smit and Carl Pacalt. In the meantime, Vanderkemp was a good deal concerned about the ordination of his best-loved colleague, James Read. The traditional repute of Vanderkemp, even in its kindest phase, accounts him eccentric, but in truth he was a man who in all the major concerns of life moved steadily in his orbit. In respect to Church order, he had convictions as strong as any Episcopalian. He would lay hands suddenly on no man. Read's ordination is referred to several times in the correspondence with the London directors. Their approval was sought. Then the formal and unanimous declaration of his spiritual fitness for the Christian ministry by the Church at Bethelsdorp was obtained. A solemn ordination was effected on September 7th, 1806. Vanderkemp was careful to point out that this ordination was not simply a setting apart for the ministry at Bethelsdorp, but had a general significance. Read was now a fully qualified minister of the Christian church. Vanderkemp evidently held the orthodox Congregational conception of the local Church, namely, that it is the Catholic Church in one place of its manifestation.

Care for Church order led Vanderkemp sometimes to impose discipline upon erring members. Thus he reports in 1806 :

Several have been seduced into sin and it is remarkable that some of those whom we considered as eminently above the rest in holiness of life have been the most deeply depressed in the mire. Not less than nine have been excommunicated, all of whom, however, except three, we have had the joy of re-admitting to our communion. A few of our Hottentot brethren and sisters, deeply impressed with the fear that God was about to take away his Spirit from us, have united themselves not only to wrestle with God in behalf of his people, but also to

reform their own conduct to stand firm against the prevailing stream, and to rouse their lukewarm brethren from their sleep.

From time to time the male members of this little community had to leave Bethelsdorp to take up work amongst the farmers. This gave them an opportunity of bearing witness to the faith that was in them but broke in badly upon their spiritual training. "In my eye," wrote Vanderkemp, "they are valiant champions but without swords." Some of these men, though thus forced back upon their own interior resources, became notable itinerant preachers.

There was Jochim Vogel, who said his whole heart was filled with love towards his brethren and sisters in Holland. "Would they pray for him that he might not turn aside from the Lord?" "This," commented Vanderkemp, "is the first instance of the secret Communion of Saints with their fellow believers which we have discovered among our people."

There was Brother Cupido, at one time "famous for swearing, lying, fighting, and especially for drunkenness." Cupido had inquired of everyone how to be delivered from drink. He was of the opinion of Shakespeare's Cassio: "O thou invisible Spirit of Wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee Devil!" One sent him to a witch, another to a wizard. These told him that his life was not worth a farthing, for such inquiries as he made were the sure sign of approaching death. Kindly folk provided him with queer medicines, which effected nothing. Then at Graaf Reinet he heard Mr. Vanderlingen say that Jesus Christ could save sinners, and going to Bethelsdorp he listened to a sermon by Vanderkemp which appeared so directed to him, that he believed the woman with whom he lodged must have betrayed his story to the preacher. Continuing as one of Vanderkemp's hearers, at last he cried: "This is not of man, but of God!" Believing, the evil spirit went out from him. Life assumed a new radiance. With a character radically changed he was able in the space of one year to lead nine men, eight women and thirteen children into the obedience of Christ.

There was a great buffalo and elephant hunter, Brother

Boezak, who is first met with when the mission was at Bota's Place and who, in those early days, was mostly "beastly drunk." Brother Boezak said he had two hearts: "The one heart will do nothing but sing all kinds of Hottentot and Bushmen's songs and all that is bad, and the other heart strives to sing the praises of Christ, tells me to go to Christ, to pray to him. Sometimes the one heart is master, and sometimes the other." At last the victory came, and, filled with the love of Christ, Boezak laboured in season and out of season in the cause of Christ.

He took in the beginning of the year (1809) a tour among the farmers where he had sown the seed before, in which he found great opposition, and in one place particularly where he was told that it was the intention of the farmers to kill him because they accused him of persuading their people to run away. No sooner did he hear this than he entered the house, against the persuasions of mother and wife, who advised him to escape. He attacked his enemies in the name of the Lord, and continued till he had gained the victory. They confessed their guilt, and acquiesced in his words as truth, and gave him full liberty to instruct their people. He gained such an influence that they were afterwards afraid to drink a dram in his presence.

There was Brother Samson. For several years before his contact with the mission he had been unhappy. The fundamental questions of life tormented him. Was there a God? What was He like? What did He require of His creatures? He got into difficulties at the time of the Farmers' rebellion in the district of Graaf Reinet. The rebels accused him of siding with the English. They locked him up, in chains, under sentence of death. But one night he effected his escape to Graaf Reinet. There, safe from his enemies, he came under the influence of the mission and, having a good memory, quickly became a scholar. He was baptised in March, 1803, by Vanderkemp, whilst the latter was still confined to bed with the "lame sickness." Brother Samson became famous as a fearless witness for Christ.

There was Brother Jocham, who left the institution at Bethelsdorp to take service at Graaf Reinet. In that district he so boldly confessed his faith and pleaded with the Heathen to receive Christ that he awoke the hostility of the farmers, and with Brother Abraham, who assisted him, he was "cast into a cage," Abraham being shamefully flogged first. Both these men were forbidden by the farmers to teach their people any more. Their release from the cage was secured through the action of a merciful field-cornet.

There was Brother Jacob, a young Hottentot who, being of an indolent temper and slow understanding, during his stay at Bethelsdorp scarcely attracted any attention, but having chosen the kraal of David Stuurman as his abode, began there to realise the spiritual life first formed in him at Bethelsdorp. "The spark of life," says the record, "which began to shine now with uncommon lustre, broke out in a lucid flame that set almost the whole kraal on fire." From David Stuurman's kraal he went further afield, and everywhere his zeal was crowned with success. "Some of the brethren," says the report of 1806, "who have been in these kraals are struck with the fervour and spirituality marking the conduct of the new converts."

Finally, there was Brother Kruisman, an exemplary Christian, of whom it is said in 1807 that "his gifts and graces begin so to shine that if they continue we shall find ourselves called to propose him as a fellow missionary. He is about twenty-one years of age, begins to read and write pretty well. His views of the doctrines of grace become very clear. 'Free Grace, free Grace' he often cries, 'must bring me to Heaven'."

Such men as these, if judged not according to the perfect ideal they sought to realise, but as we judge ourselves, were persons whom it would have been an honour to know. Bethelsdorp was intended to be an industrial mission. For years its success in that respect was not conspicuous. Viewed externally and unsympathetically, it was not a show place. But in the mind of its founder, industry was just a subsidiary concern, at best of small value if God was unfamiliar to its inmates. He honestly endeavoured to establish useful occupations for his people. His chief concern, however, was not to offer to the Colony an economic value, but to offer to God a society of souls redeemed and made one in Christ.

CHAPTER XVII

EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF BETHELSDORP UNDER THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT 1803 TO 1805

IN the early years of the nineteenth century, there were several institutions or settlements in South Africa, all more or less conducted as industrial missions. Judged by Colonial standards undoubtedly that of the Moravians at Genadendal was the most successful. In part this was due to excellent qualities in these missionaries, their devotion, patience, long-suffering and tact in dealing with the neighbouring farmers. They refused to be drawn into public controversies. Their religious outlook resembled that of the Plymouth Brethren of our day. Personal piety, industry and obedience to public authority constituted their ideal. Questions of social status, political right and freedom were of less moment. Least of all was warfare against oppression their vocation. In part also the success of Genadendal was due to its considerable natural advantages. Situated within reach of the amenities of Cape Town, in a beautiful and fertile valley, the mission engaged the best qualities of those whom it served.

Government officials, travellers and even modern historians have held up Genadendal to admiration and then turning to Bethelsdorp, have exclaimed against its poverty and troubled history. But Bethelsdorp lay on the borders of what was then a remote and disturbed region. Professor Macmillan remarks: "There was no doubt whatever that its unfavourable position was its greatest disability . . . Its waterless bush-covered area . . . could never have reproduced the success of Genadendal." He adds: "The history of Bethelsdorp was one long struggle against conditions highly unfavourable to the growth of a settled and civilised community."¹ Bethelsdorp was, in fact, the Cinderella amongst the missionary institutions and

¹ "The Cape Colour Question," p. 151.

the missionaries themselves came to regard it in that light. The responsibility for this rested partly with the Government. As Professor Macmillan points out, the institution was a Government venture and the general position of Hottentot affairs at the time of Vanderkemp's arrival at the Cape was such that, had he not come forward with his scheme, the Government itself would have been forced to organise the natives on segregational lines.

Collaboration between civil rulers and missionaries is usually a happier thing to-day than it was in the early nineteenth century. What was lacking then was any fundamental agreement as to the end in view. The statesman directed his thought to the establishment of public order. He gave religion a certain police-value. He honestly desired pleasant relations with its promoters, deeming that they should always be followers of the Prince of Peace. Either he did not know, or he forgot, that He whom they served had virtually repudiated this title : *Think ye that I am come to give peace in the earth ? I tell you nay, but rather division.* John Vanderkemp, however, never forgot this. His early career as a soldier had evoked in him a fighting spirit, which his conversion to Christ had moralised rather than eradicated.

Governor Janssens and his advisers planned Bethelsdorp as an aid to the farmers. Vanderkemp was to keep it going with just a modest amount of religious instruction, not overmuch, for religion was a medicine to be taken in small prescribed doses. Of industrial instruction there was to be a more generous allowance, because things seen and temporal have earthly values.

Ah take the cash, and let the credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant drum.

The main concern was that the neighbouring farmers should be able to draw upon the place for obedient servants. In short, Bethelsdorp was to be a factory turning out useful black tools for white hands. Under such circumstances it was not even desirable that there should be very great prosperity at Bethelsdorp. The bleakness and barrenness of the place were perhaps

a safeguard against the inhabitants becoming too much at ease in Zion. Thus, whilst contempt was expressed for the institution in its early days because it was so poor and miserable, it was precisely in the years 1809-10, when its resources increased and its poverty was less evident, that it became the object of positive hatred. These things show very clearly that Bethelsdorp's trouble with the outside world originated in the dissimilarity of aim characterising its promoters. It was just the question whether man, especially black man, was to be regarded as a means or an end. The Government—and this will be seen to apply both to the Dutch authorities and to the English who succeeded them—took the former view. Vanderkemp and his colleagues took the latter. That the Hottentots might contribute, of course as happily to themselves as was practicable, to the prosperity of the Colony, was the aim of the Castle authorities at the Cape. That they might become children of God, heirs of eternal life and incidentally, as part of their earthly education, render good service on honourable terms to their fellows, was the aim of the missionaries.

Conflict between Government and mission was inevitable. The Government was aware from the first that a good deal of cruelty characterised the Colonists' treatment of their servants, and of this they totally disapproved. In the official regulations for Bethelsdorp, drawn up under General Janssens' direction, occur the words: "No services are required of the Hottentots but upon terms of good treatment and just rewards." The value of this praiseworthy declaration of course turned upon a definition of terms. There is a famous couplet in Pope's *Essay on Man* which admonishes us, with some measure of truth:

For forms of Government let fools contest,
Whate'er is best administer'd is best.

In this case the administration was in the hands, not of officials at Cape Town, but of *landdrosts*, that is, magistrates, and their subordinates, the field-cornets, and these men were almost invariably hand-in-glove with the farmers, often being connected with them by marriage. Under such circum-

stances, the benevolence of the Government towards the natives had scant opportunity for any real expression. We have an illustration of the temper of the local officials in a letter from Captain Alberti, at the time *landdrost* of Uitenhage, to whom Vanderkemp had made complaint in respect to a certain farmer's maltreatment of his Hottentots. Alberti dismissed the matter with the statement that he could not place implicit faith in Hottentot "talk."¹

Repeated experiences of this kind led Vanderkemp and Read at last to take a serious step :

We thought it our duty to declare, in a letter written April 18th (1804) to the Governor . . . that our consciences would not permit us any longer to observe that hard article of the settlement granted to our institution, by which we were recommended to encourage the voluntary engagement of the Hottentots into the service of the Colonists, on account of the cruelty and injustice with which those who entered into their service were treated, without any justice being done to them by the Magistrates. In answer to this the Governor ordered the *landdrost* of this district to take the necessary steps. This not being done, and the oppression of these inhuman wretches, who call themselves Christians, for the greatest part continuing unpunished, we find ourselves constrained to persist in our declaration.²

This step, like the withdrawal of ambassadors between two countries, was equivalent to a declaration of war. On the one hand the authorities were affronted and the farmers enraged. On the other hand, Hottentots bringing their tales of woe, both true and false, crowded into Bethelsdorp beyond its normal capability for receiving and training them. The farmers reported to the Government that Bethelsdorp was a refuge for idle, good-for-nothing savages. What the missionaries did, or forbore to do, was misrepresented and the cordial sympathy which had existed at the first between Governor Janssens and Vanderkemp evaporated. At length on February

¹December 29th 1803. London Missionary Society's archives.

²Annual Report, 1804.

20th, 1805, a proclamation regulating missionary work in the Colony was issued, in which occur the following provisions:

That the institution of Dr. Vanderkemp, established upon legal authority at Bethelsdorp, be also permitted to remain within the foregoing limits, but upon the following conditions :

(a) That neither the missionary Vanderkemp, nor any of his fellow missionaries belonging to the institution at Bethelsdorp, shall be permitted to go without a special consent from the Governor and Commander-in-Chief, or from the County Sheriff of Uitenhage, out of the limits of the Colony.

(b) That only wandering Hottentots, or others, who from this institution have gone into the service of the inhabitants, shall be permitted to receive instruction ; but no Hottentots who are actually serving the inhabitants, or have served them in the course of the preceding year, be permitted to be received in it.

No instruction in writing, as this is not absolutely necessary in the commencement of cultivation, shall be permitted in the schools already established or that may be established hereafter ; but this instruction shall be postponed, till express licence from the Governor and Commander-in-Chief be obtained for it.

The prohibition of writing is significant of the entire policy of the Government, and undoubtedly was based upon representations made by the farmers. To give the natives the art of writing was to place in their hands an instrument for co-operation which might lead to combined action. Moreover, the very sense of the intellectual superiority of their servants which such an accomplishment would necessarily evoke in men who themselves could hardly write their own names, was exasperating. Perhaps Epictetus would never have had his leg broken by his master if he had not been a philosopher as well as a slave.

Another line of attack upon Bethelsdorp was nationalist in character. Vanderkemp and Read were the representatives of an English Society, whilst the Cape was now a Dutch

Dominion. No opportunity should be given for exercise of English influence. Patriots represented to the Governor that an institution of this kind was a source of political danger. The Governor so far acquiesced as to suggest to Vanderkemp that the mission should be transferred to the Dutch Missionary Society, and Vanderkemp readily agreed. Changes of this kind, however, could only be effected slowly. Meanwhile grievances accumulated. Vanderkemp wrote in plain and vigorous language to the Governor respecting the cases of ill-treatment daily reported to him, for which he could obtain no redress. He was not a man to indulge in those decorous euphuisms which persons in high places prefer to employ. His language caused irritation, and at last there came from Janssens a sharp retort :

The bitter tone in which your reverence ascribes evil motives to others, the unfounded rights which your reverence wishes to guarantee to Hottentots as against Europeans, the encouragement and protection which the evil-minded and those that have gone astray find with your reverence, do no less harm than the mal-treatment and evil advice of some Boers. It is said that extremes tend to meet. In this case it is only too true. The state in which matters are on the Kafir border grieves me. I had hoped to find at the institution at Bethelsdorp loyal co-operation with the magistrate at Uitenhage. It was in vain. The hate which the Boers bear to the institution would be just if hate ever could be just, as that of the institution against the Europeans illuminates everything. Had the directorate used its knowledge, possessions and its moral teaching to win the affection of some of the Boers, then I believe that religion, the country and the Hottentots would have gained thereby. Love has good, hate only evil, consequences . . . I had hoped to find in Mr. Vanderkemp, whose learning and experience were known to me, counsel and aid in the pursuit of peace, security and justice amongst all. Now it appears that I must abandon this hope, along with many others, to my regret. Ascribe it only to my ill fortune in holding a high

post that I adopt, as it were, a tone of censure. It proceeds not from lack of honour to your person and grey head, but in virtue of the heavy responsibilities which rest on me. Be well assured, sir, that I do not in any way approve the great injustices which many Boers practise . . . I pray and adjure the directorate of Bethelsdorp to approach more closely to the magistrate and to recognise fully that it is the duty of the institution to submit to the same authority. If anyone thinks he has reason to complain then the complaints can be submitted here, but to fail to appreciate the legal authority of the community is a deviation from duty.¹

It is impossible not to feel some sympathy with the Governor at a time when the political situation was full of danger. Moreover, his admonitions to Vanderkemp were not unjustified. Throughout his life Vanderkemp, when stirred by the sight of cruelty, was apt to use the sternest language of indignation. How far is such an attitude to be approved? Anger is the feeling of repudiation intensified into the desire to destroy. If directed against individuals it may be, as our Lord himself taught, the seed of murder. If, however, it is exercised in the discrimination of a man and his deed, it may be a virtue. But it is a virtue difficult to manage. One of the best expositions of the subject is to be found in two famous sermons by Bishop Butler, that on Resentment, and the following one upon Forgiveness of Injuries. To quote from both :

The indignation raised by cruelty and injustice, and the desire of having it punished, which persons unconcerned would feel, is by no means malice. No ; it is resentment against vice and wickedness : it is one of the common bonds by which society is held together ; a fellow-feeling which each individual has in behalf of the whole species, as well as of himself. And it does not appear that this, generally speaking, is at all too high amongst mankind.

¹*Translated from the Dutch original in the London Missionary Society's archives.*

On the other hand :

No one ever did a designed injury to another, but at the same time he did a much greater to himself. If, therefore, we could consider things justly, such an one is, according to the natural course of our affections, an object of compassion, as well as of displeasure : and to be affected really in this manner, I say really, in opposition to show and pretence, argues the true greatness of mind.

It was this latter consideration which Vanderkemp failed to realise. There had been a time when his conscience was so sensitive to the qualities of his own emotions that in perfectly innocent occupations he was wont to pause and question his motive in following them. Thus, during his Kafir mission, he wrote once to two friends : “ Some days ago I was occupied in writing down the name of a Caffarian herb. Having written one-half of it, Satan suggested to me : ‘ Do you this in the belief of Jesus, or out of mere curiosity ? If you cannot say the former, then you know that you sin willingly and intentionally by writing further.’ My conscience accused me, and I stood undetermined and did not dare to proceed.” Finally he rose out of this meticulous scrupulosity and continued his scientific record. Such, however, was often his temper in those earlier days. Seldom in our rough and turbulent world are religious sanctions made the referee for every detail of the game of life. But perhaps it would have been better if such a reference had shaped Vanderkemp’s correspondence with Captain Alberti and Governor Janssens. As it was he was apt to overwork that consolatory word in the Gospel which bids us rejoice when we are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.

The correspondence with Janssens resulted in April 1805 in a summons to Vanderkemp to repair to Cape Town for the purpose of discussing the questions at issue. Ullbricht took charge of the station and, accompanied by James Read, Vanderkemp set out on his long journey. The excitement at Bethelsdorp was great. Many rejoiced openly, for now their grievances were to be brought under the Governor’s full attention. Others, with the affection so characteristic of the Hottentot, bewailed the temporary separation from their

leader. The party, in all twelve persons, reached Cape Town after five weeks' travel.

In a long report of the proceedings which followed the missionaries wrote home to the directors :

The Governor having sent for Brother Vanderkemp, treated him as one for whom he had affection and sincere esteem, but whose notions and proceedings, although free from all criminal intentions, and in many respects agreeing with his own views, he could not help disapproving as being injurious to the public rest and good harmony between the Boers and Hottentots in these distant districts.

It appeared that certain accusations had been made against Vanderkemp by his enemies. The first concerned a number of Hottentot desertions from military service, in which his name had been used by the deserters to justify their default. Vanderkemp had no difficulty in showing the Governor that he had actually urged upon these men their military obligations. A second charge was that he had disregarded the order of the *landdrost* to send four Hottentots from Bethelsdorp to Algoa Bay for Government purposes. Vanderkemp's defence was that he had communicated the order to the men concerned, but had been unable to enforce it, and that the *landdrost* had sent over a party of armed men to fetch them, but that they also had failed in their attempt, and failing had excused themselves to the *landdrost* by putting the blame upon himself. A third accusation was that Vanderkemp had received and passed on friendly salutations from former English commanders to certain members of the Hottentot community. This reveals significantly the state of tension in political feeling at the time. An invasion of the Cape by British forces was constantly feared by officials and people alike, and it was not unnatural that a perfectly innocent correspondence between Vanderkemp and former English officers should have been construed as treasonable. It appeared that one such friend of his, a Lieutenant-Colonel Le Moyne, formerly commanding at Algoa Bay, in a letter to Vanderkemp had sent courteous greeting to certain Hottentots who had been his domestic servants. In

respect to this accusation there was little difficulty in convincing the Governor of its futility. It became clear, however, that Vanderkemp was suspected of pro-English leanings, and on this ground the Governor decided that, under the political conditions then obtaining, he could not permit either Vanderkemp or Read to return to Bethelsdorp, or to labour anywhere outside Cape Town. The Governor seems to have emphasised once more the element of gentleness and forbearance in the Christian ideal, and in a kindly way to have reproached Vanderkemp for his failure to love his enemies. To which the latter replied that with respect to the winning of the affection of the Boers he considered it "a blessedness to be hated by rogues and murderers whose esteem could not be won except by taking part in their deeds."

The missionaries now found themselves perplexed as to their future course. They endeavoured to work in co-operation with the Council of the Reformed Church in Cape Town, but received very little sympathy in that quarter. One field of service, however, opened before them, in respect to the large number of slaves in the town who were entirely lacking in Christian instruction, and amongst whom there was a certain amount of Mohammedan propaganda. The two men gave themselves unreservedly to the work of instructing these poor people and undoubtedly won the affection and gratitude of many. We have an interesting glimpse of Vanderkemp in the life of Henry Martyn, who touched at the Cape on his way to the East, in January 1806. He had heard much of the Doctor, and was delighted to meet with him. "It was long," he says, "before I could find him. At length I did. He was standing outside of the house, silently looking up at the stars. A great number of black people were sitting around. On my introducing myself he led me in and called for Mr. Read. . . . I was beyond measure delighted. . . . I hardly knew what to do. . . . Walking home I asked Dr. Vanderkemp if he had ever repented of his undertaking. 'No,' said the old man, smiling, 'and I would not exchange my work for a kingdom.' Dear Dr. Vanderkemp gave me a Syriac Testament as a remembrance of him."¹

¹ "Henry Martyn," by Constance E. Padwick, pp. 148 and 9.

A still more intimate glimpse into Vanderkemp's personal life at this time is afforded us by a conversation which Mr. Read records under date the 16th December, 1805 :

“ You know,” said Vanderkemp, “ how many and precious promises you as well as I have for a long time received from God that He would contend with them who contended with us, and save our children. How wonderfully He strengtheneth us and holds us steadfast in the face of our enemies. Nevertheless, though I have concealed it from you, I have found that hope deferred makes the heart sick. I have not a little contended with the Lord concerning His dealings with us. Sin and likewise Satan, taking occasion by my dejection, had gradually got the overhand of me, and I should not dare to tell you how far distant from the Lord these brought me. This has been the cause of my doubting of the truth of God's promise or rather of the application of it to my circumstances. I conceived that God had driven me from Bethelsdorp because of my transgressions, and that very likely I should find no grace in His eyes to go back there again. But now I would tell you how I am delivered from these doubts. Never in my life, more than once or twice in Holland, did I undertake to address God as my Father, although I doubted not that He was . . . and then with much aversion and dislike. But last Friday I had a deep sensation of the satisfying power of Christ's righteousness, and I found myself clothed by it from all sin. . . . I stepped boldly into the presence of God my Father who manifested Himself in love to my soul, and I am sure that whatever I had prayed for in that moment I should have received. Suchlike I never experienced before. He seemed to encourage me that I should only pray, yet I prayed for nothing except for the conversion of . . .¹ When I now thought that I had nothing more to ask He said : ‘ Do you now believe that you have found grace in My eyes ? ’ I cannot doubt that He will not disappoint our hope, but give us to see our congregation again.”

¹ *Manuscript illegible.*

From the time of his first arrival at the Cape, as has been already recorded, Madagascar interested Vanderkemp and the directors, and during the troubles at Bethelsdorp he was continually turning over in his mind the possibility of proceeding thither. Now, during his time of uncertainty at Cape Town, he revived the project and discussed it with the Governor, who, one may suspect, rather gladly welcomed the possibility of getting rid of so difficult a man in a way honourable on both sides. He promised him every facility in his power. Still the months dragged on, and, beyond the work amongst the slaves, the missionary project had small promise. Deliverance came unexpectedly one day from the sea. On the morning of the 4th January, 1806, signals were flashed from the Lion's Rump that numerous sails were in sight. Before evening sixty-three British ships of war anchored between Robben Island and the mainland. The long-expected invasion began the next day. A powerful British force of disciplined regulars, outnumbering any Dutch forces which could be readily mobilised, proceeded to take up strategic positions around Cape Town. In the battle of Blueberg which followed on the 8th January, the British, under Sir David Baird, were completely victorious. On the 18th of the month General Janssens finally capitulated, and Cape Colony passed once more into British hands. It was not long before Vanderkemp had a personal interview with Sir David Baird, who received him with that respect which almost always Vanderkemp excited in the minds of men in high rank. Sir David consulted him as to the disposal of the Hottentot prisoners-of-war whom he had taken, leaving it to him to determine if and when they should be set at liberty. Writing to the directors, Vanderkemp says : " We have little doubt but he (Sir David Baird) will permit us to return to our dear Bethelsdorp as soon as tranquillity shall be restored to that country. Thus has the Lord avenged us of all them that by the instigation of Satan rose up against us. Our hearts are full of joy. May they be full of thankfulness and our lips of praise. Our confidence is not to be turned from the Lord to trust in external appearances and the face of man, but continues immovable in Him in prosperity as well as in adversity and trials of our faith."

His expectations were happily fulfilled. The new English Governor gave him the necessary permission to return and even provided him with one of the waggons taken from the defeated Dutch army. Thus with exuberant joy and hope Vanderkemp once more left Cape Town for the east, accompanied by his colleague Smit and eleven Hottentot men and women, arriving at Bethelsdorp in about six weeks' time, to find that Read, who had made the journey by sea, had reached there twelve days earlier. Now the Malagasy project faded away, for the time at least, in the light of a new hope for the success of Bethelsdorp.

CHAPTER XVIII

A STAGE IN THE SPIRAL

THERE is recapitulation in all human progress. The ascent of man, racially perhaps, certainly in individual experience, resembles that remarkable railway from Italy to Switzerland by which the traveller climbs to the mouth of the St. Gothard Tunnel. From the plain to the far height, where the mountain is pierced, the line winds upward in a spiral so that at last one may look down upon the track he has covered repeatedly before, coming back to much the same position in the route, only at a very different altitude. So after we have become elderly folk we often return to the emotions of our youth, and when we are aged, a second childhood is possible which is by no means the burlesque of our first, but a real if somewhat faint revivification of our earliest impressions and of delights in simple things.

This recapitulatory process in the natural man is often emphasised in spiritual experience. It finds expression in one of George Herbert's most delightful poems, *The Flower* :

How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean
Are thy returns ! Ev'n as the flow'rs in spring ;
To which, besides their own demean,
The late-past frosts tributes of pleasure bring.
Grief melts away
Like snow in May,
As if there were no such cold thing.

Who would have thought my shrivel'd heart
Could have recover'd greenness ? It was gone
Quite underground, as flow'rs depart
To see their Mother-root, when they have blown ;

Where they together
All the hard weather
Dead to the world, keep house unknown.

* * * *

And now in age I bud again,
After so many deaths I live and write,
I once more smell the dew and rain,
And relish versing. O my only light
It cannot be
That I am he
On whom thy tempests fell all night.

There is more in the poet's thought here than merely the recovery of peace of heart. Herbert, who in his youth had enjoyed no mean measure of social gaiety, was never dehumanised by sanctity. Spiritual revival in his case carried with it "the smell of dew and rain," and once more he "relished versing."

In like manner John Vanderkemp had now emerged upon a definitely higher stage of religious experience, with vital consequences. It must have been an immense relief to find the structure of malice erected against him blown to pieces by the guns that won the field of Blueberg. He was evidently cheered by the victorious commander's cordial respect. But even before the British fleet hove in view, he had entered into—and this for the first time in his life—the realisation of the Divine Fatherhood. Up till then his faith had been almost Swedenborgian in its deification of Jesus. In that he had rested and it had sufficed. Yet even as the whole Catholic Church is to reach a time when the Son also shall be subject to the Father, that God may be all in all, so no Christian experience can be mature which does not lead us on through the Saviourhood of our Lord into that infinite world of love and power wherein finally the soul finds full relationship with its Maker. There can be no joy so intense, or so quickening, as that of knowing the Father. Out of such things come beautiful and also strange happenings. To our friends we grow young again. And because God is *the fountain of life*—life in its full-

ness, physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual—opportunity is ours for fresh ventures which may not be indeed always of His direction though achieved through His spirit. Life is given, and because it is really given we use it as we will.

Vanderkemp was back again in the heyday of manhood. Folk had long spoken of him as old. Governor Janssens had referred to his grey head. But as he returned to Bethelsdorp, the winter of his discontent made glorious summer by the sun of England's might, the pulls of blood strengthened. Literally, too, it was summertime in South Africa. His waggon rolled on its slow way, stopping every night punctually at six, for he lived by rule. He passed through lovely stretches of cultivated land. All things betokened hope and fruition. Even on the border of a desert stretch, now and again he was touched with sudden rapture at the sight of mimosa trees in greenest foliage, glittering with countless golden blossoms that cast about his path a wavy sea of delicious fragrance. Gorgeous butterflies flitted from bloom to bloom, and longtailed pheasants added their splendour to the boughs whereon they rested. The loveliest lizards jewelled the interlacings of sunshine and shadow. Might not his own life be as one of these strong trees, a tree of refuge, of shelter, still bringing forth fruit in old age?

So he went his way with the eagerness of earlier years, and when he came to Bethelsdorp he took to him again a wife. The marriage was performed by his colleague Read. It was announced to the directors of the London Missionary Society in a letter to Mr. Hardcastle, their treasurer, dated July 10th, 1806:

You'll be surprised when I inform you that I am, after having been a widower fifteen years, remarried with a native of this country, whose mother is a native of Madagascar. I hope that in this step I have consulted and followed the will of God, and that this alliance will not prove a stumbling-block to me in my missionary work; my present wife being fully resolved to accompany me wherever it shall please God to send me.

There was no trace in Mr. Hardcastle's reply of any shock

felt in the London Mission House at these tidings—nothing but the beautiful courtesy and goodwill which marks the whole of the correspondence between the directors and their pioneer. But shock there must have been, and at the Cape it amounted to intense repulsion and scorn. Yet what one might feel on the bare mention of the fact would perhaps be modified on closer consideration.

Mid-Victorians, like the writer of this book, remember the thrilling joy with which they read Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* and how long before the wonderful end of the tale their sympathy demanded the union of the hero, Sir Amyas Leigh, with the Indian girl he had befriended. We dreaded lest he should fail to perceive how gratitude in one so naturally affectionate inevitably issued in love. Entirely beautiful is that last page, where the blind hero for a moment breaks down under his affliction, and Ayacanora falls on her knees at his feet, covering his hand with kisses :

“Yes!” she cried, “I will be your slave! I must be! You cannot help it! You cannot escape from me now! You cannot go to sea! You cannot turn your back upon wretched me. I have you safe now! Safe!” and she clutched his hands triumphantly. “Ah! and what a wretch I am, to rejoice in that! to taunt him with his blindness! Oh, forgive me! I am but a poor wild girl—a wild Indian savage, you know: but—but - - -” and she burst into tears.

Was there not something of all that, too, excepting the helplessness of the man, in Vanderkemp's mating with his Malagasy bride? He had found her a slave and as he had done before and was to do again¹ he drew upon his little capital invested in European funds to purchase her freedom. He met her at Cape Town in 1805 or 6. Her lot was a sad one, just as had been that of his first wife in Leyden many years before. Pity stirred in him, and something else, the fruit of that new zest for life which faith in the Divine Father had evoked.

¹Read states in a letter, January 30th, 1808, that Vanderkemp, during the previous three years, had redeemed seven slaves out of his own pocket, paying not much less than 5,000 Rix Dollars (£800 or more).

Moreover the Malagasy women were not as the Hottentot. A traveller to Madagascar in 1853 speaks of their well-proportioned high perpendicular foreheads, and well-marked eyebrows and clear bright eyes;¹ their faces, not beautiful as a general rule but exhibiting no low animal type of disposition. And Vanderkemp's bride—*Sara* is all the name by which we know her—we may be sure had attractions of mind and heart not countervailed by her dusky skin. Desdemona, we remember, justified her love of the black Moor by this :

I saw Othello's visage in his mind—

and Dr. A. C. Bradley has well said of her : “ She made nothing of the shrinking of her senses, but followed her soul until her senses took part with it, and loved him with the love which was her doom.”² But in the case of Vanderkemp's bride, whatever inner beauty shone through her physical features, chiefly the way of access to his heart was through her need, wherein she touched a central human chord. As Buddha and Christ alike have taught men :

Pity and need
Make all flesh kin. There is no caste in blood
Which runneth of one hue, nor caste in tears
Which trickle salt with all.³

It is significant that at the time of his marrying her she was no Christian. Indeed her baptism did not take place until three years later. She made no sham pretences of faith in order to win his regard. She saw in his face that same “ faded beauty,” which even the unsympathetic eyes of the German traveller had seen, and in his whole bearing that strength of person and of purpose by which other women before her had been attracted. And when he bought her and told her she was free and at no man's disposal, no chattel, but a woman with rights before God as the highest ranked lady in Cape Town—for with Him was no respect of persons—she drew to her

¹Ellis, “ *Visits to Madagascar*,” p. 300.

²“ *Shakespearian Tragedy*,” pp. 201-2.

³“ *The Light of Asia*,” Book VI.

deliverer with a gratitude and affection which a harder nature than his could scarcely have repelled. Perchance she kissed his hands, and as in the story of Merlin and Vivien,

The pale blood of the wizard at her touch
Took gayer colours like an opal warmed,

so in Vanderkemp old instincts revived. He offered her his heart and home.

Another aspect of the matter is, I think, clear to us. That this seventeen-year-old bride was of the Malagasy people probably invested her person with an additional interest, since Madagascar was constantly in Vanderkemp's thoughts as the goal of his missionary career. Men of his complexity of disposition seldom act from one impulse alone. In his old-fashioned way of utilising Scripture, it is likely there came some thought of a symbolic value in this new marriage venture. Isaiah and Hosea had drawn from their own family life illustrations for their public teaching, giving to their children names that embodied those prophetic truths God had bidden them declare. So, perhaps, for the Christian missionary marriage with a liberated slave-child of Africa might show to all white people the truth for which he stood, how that God had made of one blood all nations of men, whether Malagasy, Hottentot, Dutch, or English.

Marriage always involves costs of various kinds on both sides. In this case there was something more for Vanderkemp to pay, over and above the money he had paid for his bride. Surely seldom, if ever, has a gifted European scholar and physician had to write to those whose servant he was in terms like the following, which occur in a letter dated September 30th 1807, to the Treasurer of the London Missionary Society :

The circumstances in which I am involved by my second marriage have put me to unusual expenses. To set my mother-in-law with four children (actually being slaves) at liberty required 3,250 rix dollars. In order to procure this sum I have taken the liberty to draw upon you in favour of Mr. Hendrik De Tough in Cape Town for

Bills of Exchange, the first in date September 29th 1807 of £340, the second October 5th 1807 of £330, to be paid out of my revenues.

He never drew back in shame from the connection he had made—"my mother-in-law with four children actually being slaves." Later in a letter to the London Missionary Society he spoke of her as "a beloved mother, a widow with six children." This is just the same socially-defiant man who over his first marriage at Leyden had flouted alike the Prince of Orange's remonstrances and the counsels of his relatives. There was truth in Lichtenstein's reference to his "proud humility."

From time to time we get slight glimpses of Vanderkemp's new family life. Three sons and a daughter were given to him, his eldest, born in 1807, named Cornelius after Vanderkemp's father—one wonders what that distinguished divine and his wife the burgomaster's daughter would have felt about the compliment—then Sidericus and Africanus and lastly Sarah Johanna.¹

Mrs. Vanderkemp took her place humbly in the mission community at Bethelsdorp, content, (perhaps partly because in her marriage she had so much honour and joy) to be classified amongst those outside the Christian fold. Three years passed, during which her husband by no means neglected his duty towards her soul. He taught her the way of Christ and watched for signs of His grace. Her health was indifferent, and on August 12th, 1809, suddenly she became seriously ill, so much so that, expecting death, she spoke farewell words to her husband and to little Cornelius. Evening came and the hour of worship. The Church was filled with a sympathetic congregation. During Brother Read's sermon a native woman stole in and whispered to Brother Ullbricht and Brother Smit that the doctor wanted them. Many dark and kindly eyes followed the two men as they slipped out, and Brother Read

¹After their father's death, two of the boys were sent to England to be educated at the expense of the London Missionary Society, a responsibility the Board gladly undertook as some slight recognition of Vanderkemp's great services. They do not appear, however, to have inherited their father's aptitude for study, and on the recommendation of their tutor they were sent back to the Cape.

limped on his sermonic way. Vanderkemp, watching at the bedside of the sufferer, administering medical relief and spiritual counsel too, saw the latter to be more efficacious than the former :

He concluded (says the report), that he should be inexcusable if he did not acknowledge her confidence in Christ by administering the covenant seal of baptism which he did after receiving her approbation, and having called Brother Ullbricht and Brother Smit as witnesses of the business, its urgency not admitting the usual form of consulting the whole Church. Brother Vanderkemp was, however, enabled to plead upon that promise with great liberty and confidence, "Call upon me in the day of trouble" and he was not made ashamed, for late in the evening she recovered greatly. The next morning being Sabbath, after service Brother Vanderkemp reported the case to the brethren and sisters, requesting Brother Read to receive their testimony, which he did, and reported that nothing was brought in why she could not be admitted as a sister to the Lord's Supper. She was introduced to the Church and received with the usual ceremonies and singing of a hymn applicable to the subject. And the same afternoon she communicated with us. The same evening, however, her sickness returned and death again seemed to threaten. Her confidence was great, but sometimes a little disturbed by violent temptations. She took again farewell and wished to be gone and to be with Christ. At her request Brothers Read and Ullbricht were called, but before they came she was insensible. Brother Read in kneeling down to pray had the words of the Apostle James put into his mouth, "Is any sick among you let him call for the elders of the Church," and was enabled to plead for her with great liberty, and the Lord was pleased to be entreated on her behalf.

So far as health was concerned, she was by no means out of the wood. Various references to her illnesses occur in the correspondence of that time, and Vanderkemp himself reported

to the directors in January, 1810: "My dear wife is daily seized with fits of alarming symptoms." His own health often temporarily failed, and being of an adventurous disposition, he sometimes added to his infirmities by needless risks. At one time, whilst superintending the building of a house, a heavy wood frame fell upon his head which, to the scandal of white people, was always hatless, inflicting grievous wounds. At another time he was tossed by an ox, and injured in the hip. His young wife, by instinct and early habit more truly a part of the society of nature than himself, showed him how to tame adders, and they kept one in their little home. Vanderkemp would fondle it in his hands. Unfortunately adders, like other creatures, are prone to panic, and the presence of some farmers with him one day frightened it so that it bit his hand, and brought the blood. Everyone expected him soon to fall down dead, but like St. Paul at Malta he shook off the beast and took no harm. He was, however, unlike the Apostle in this, that his escape did not lead to any revolution in the opinion of the farmers about him. Men of their sort were apt to classify him amongst the malefactors, and unluckily the incident of the adder did not cause them to change their minds and say that he was a god.

About this time he completed a work he had begun long before entitled *The Theodicy of Paul*, and then turned his medical knowledge to good account by writing what Read called "a considerable work upon midwifery" for the use of Bethelsdorp.

An illuminating passage in his Journal of 1809 shows us the man at his central and most important work. It is selected here for its typical value in relation to Vanderkemp himself, and because it mirrors so plainly the kind of work in which an African mission in the early nineteenth century was engaged:

On Friday, the 16th February, I left Bethelsdorp for Stuurman's kraal; in the evening I came about a mile on the other side of the strand fountain, where we found water and there we slept. On the 17th in the afternoon I arrived at Stuurman's kraal. He was not at home, nor was any hut prepared for our meetings. The number of people

belonging to this kraal has increased, and also the huts which had been more dispersed through the woods. Several houses built in the European form, and neatly plastered with brown clay gave them the appearance of brick houses. Most of the men were absent, and the women informed me of the extreme wickedness and enmity against religion which prevailed amongst them, which they considered as the reason why no house was built for worship. They likewise told me that David and the rest of the men were shy of our visits, as they restrained them from intoxicating themselves by curry, which seemed to be their chief food and occupation. David had consumed almost all his cattle, and was commonly wandering in the woods for food, leaving his wives to starve at home.

This report grieved me and I thought that this should be the last time I should visit this kraal, resolving to take at my departure a final and solemn leave of this perverse generation by preaching from *Matthew X.*, 14., or another text of the same import; but before I came to this resolution I found myself inclined to give them a more full description of Christ's person, office, doctrine, atonement and exaltation in a continued series of lectures. With this intention I spoke this evening on *Luke I.*, 26-38, to about thirty-five people.

February 18th. This morning I continued my subject from *Luke II.*, 1-21, and perceived a visible agitation among several of the people, which induced me to repent of my former intention to give up preaching in this kraal. The number of hearers amounted to about eighty and almost every hour more arrived from the neighbouring places to hear the Word of God. In the evening I spoke from *Matthew II.* During service David Stuurman arrived.

I found in the afternoon the place before our house too small to contain the number of attendants. I therefore set myself down on a somewhat elevated ground and preached on *Matthew XXII.*, 3-14. In the beginning I was much affected from sympathy with the people, whose affec-

tions rose to a high pitch, but this gradually subsided, and at length I became as unfeeling as a stone, nor do I recollect to have ever preached such an insipid sermon. I was, however, afterwards a little revived by conversation with Philip, his wife, his son-in-law Adonis, a Kafir woman of our own place called Ratrijn, our sister Poela and an old Hottentot called Goeda, father of Adam and Platje. In the evening I spoke from *Matthew IV*.

19th, morning. Treated of Christ's baptism according to *Matthew III*.

20th, morning. I took *Matthew V*. for my subject. This day Frans Vincent arrived, with a number of his people, among whom several girls appeared under serious impressions. In the evening I explained *Matthew VII* and *VIII*., 1-15. I took particular notice of a man who seemed under great agony of mind, and was informed that he was a zealous preacher among Vincent's people.

21st, morning. I spoke from *Matthew IX*., 1-13, and 27-31. I had a soul-refreshing conversation with the mentioned preacher, whose name was Hendrick Kivit, and who informed me that Jacob had been the means of his conversion. In the evening took up *John IX*.

22nd. I began to speak on Christ's suffering, from *Luke XXII*., 1-6. After service I baptised Brother Hendrick Kivit, and walked to the place of Philip, with whose family I conversed and returned home. I spoke on *Luke XXIII*., 26-49, *Matthew XXVII*., 57-66.

23rd. I related the particulars of Christ's Resurrection and manifestation to His disciples. In the evening I celebrated the Lord's Supper with Brother Kivit and Sister Poela, and spoke on Christ's Ascension and the Last Judgment.

24th. I spoke from *John III*. on the necessity of regeneration, and departed.

25th. I arrived at Bethelsdorp.

And at Bethelsdorp—"our dear Bethelsdorp" as he and Read often called it—were his ailing wife and little children. They had involved him in responsibilities and cares, but

had brought also simple human loves. He was ever a fighter, and a sterner battle than any he had waged before was now rising to a crisis. If he failed to be altogether after the fashion of Wordsworth's *Happy Warrior*, yet he is well described in this part, at least, of that noble poem :

He who though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes ;
Sweet images ! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart ; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve ;
More brave for this that he hath much to love.

CHAPTER XIX

EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF BETHELSDORP UNDER THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, 1806-1811

DURING this second period of Vanderkemp's work at Bethelsdorp there were certain marked improvements in the internal life of the place, but there was also a definite deterioration in its external relations.

The new Government at once consented to remove the prohibition upon writing in mission schools. A library was founded. Mr. Read constructed a stone-built smith's shop, and Mr. Ullbricht a carpenter's. Mrs. Matthilde Smith not only carried on for a time her industrial classes amongst the women and children, but exercised an excellent influence upon the Hottentot women in spiritual concerns. By the unanimous consent of the Church-members she was appointed a deaconess. Twice bereaved of a husband and many times bereaved of children, this good woman gave herself to religious work wherever opportunity offered. Her eminent piety was illustrated very fully after her death in a volume of memoirs. She had moved in the higher circles of society in Cape Town, and was a lady of fairly affluent means. From the beginning of Vanderkemp's stay in South Africa she had been in touch with him, and being but two years his junior and of his own nationality, and one who like himself had suffered great sorrows, she was able to enter into his work with true sympathy. So much was this the case that at one time she used to follow up his spoken addresses with some words of personal appeal, and was often of great service thus in giving point and practicality to his more theological instructions. There was, however, one fly in the ointment. She was a slave-owner. In that respect she resembled many other good people at the Cape. Every one of the directors of the South African Missionary Society, which Vanderkemp had called into existence,

owned slaves. So common was the practice that certain missionaries of the London Society appear to have followed it too. They ought to have known better, for those were the days in England when the Abolition movement was in full swing and the London directors were in close touch with all the philanthropic efforts of the time. When news reached London that some of their representatives at the Cape had purchased slaves for their own use, the directors did not lose a moment in pronouncing judgment. They passed, and communicated to all their servants at the Cape, a resolution dated 23rd May, 1808: "That to hold the persons of men or women in a state of slavery is inconsistent with the principles of the Christian religion, and with the character of a Christian missionary, and that if any missionary in connection with this Society shall after the communication of this resolution be chargeable with this offence, the relation betwixt such person and the Society is by that act dissolved, and all obligation on the part of the latter to contribute to his support immediately ceases." But Mrs. Smith was not a paid servant of the Society, and despite all that Vanderkemp could say to her upon the subject, she did not see her way to emancipate her slaves. One of these had actually accompanied her to Bethelsdorp. It became necessary to request her to send him back. That was in the beginning of 1807. On the 25th March in that year "the Parliament of Great Britain abolished the slave trade in British ships and by British subjects to or from any part of the coast of Africa to take effect from the first of May."¹ This action of the Home Government pointed towards, although it did not for many years result in, emancipation, and Sister Smith of Bethelsdorp felt uncomfortable. Accordingly we are not surprised to read in the report of that institution for 1807, under the date December 11th: "Our worthy Sister Smith departed with her niece to the Cape, after Brother Vanderkemp had recommended her to God in prayer."

When the news of the abolition of the trade reached Bethelsdorp, a thanksgiving Service was held there at which the "horrid iniquity of trading in human flesh" was impressed upon the minds of all and a hymn composed by Vanderkemp

¹ "*History of South Africa*," by G. M. Theal. Volume II, p. 134.

for the occasion was sung. There was sincere joy amongst the missionaries at this event, which doubtless the Hottentots shared with more or less intelligence. Perhaps the feelings of all would have been less jubilant if they could have foreseen the economic consequences of Abolition. The undoing of a great wrong often involves occasions for fresh iniquity. It is not easy for a community, any more than it is for an individual, to retrace steps which never should have been taken. The end of the slave trade in South Africa gradually involved a shortage of labour on the farms, and this led to an arbitrary demand for Hottentot services and unjust legislation. Up to the year 1809 the law recognised that the Hottentots were a free people : “ entitled to govern themselves and to come and go when and where they liked, except upon private property.”¹ The tribal government of the Hottentots had, however, ceased within the Colonial boundaries, and to the British authorities it seemed needful to bring all wandering natives under fuller control. Accordingly on the 1st of November, 1809, the Earl of Caledon, at that time governor of the Colony, issued a proclamation which “ removed all vestiges of chieftainship from the Hottentots in the Colony and restrained those people from wandering about at will.”

The Governor therefore ordained that every Hottentot in the different districts of the Colony, in the same manner as other inhabitants should have a fixed place of abode ; that an entry thereof should be made in the office of the fiscal or the respective *landdrosts* ; and that no Hottentot should change his residence from one district to another without a certificate from the fiscal or the *landdrost* of the district from which he was removing, which certificate he was to exhibit to the fiscal or the *landdrost* of the district where he intended to settle, for the purpose of having it registered. Every Hottentot who should neglect this regulation was to be considered a vagabond, and be treated accordingly.

All contracts of service of Hottentots for a month or a longer period were to be made in writing before the fiscal,

¹*Theal, op. cit., p. 146.*

a *landdrost*, or a field-cornet, and a copy was to be registered. In case of this not being done, the Hottentot could claim the benefit of the engagement, but the employer had no ground for action. Ample provision was made in the proclamation for the enforcement of the punctual payment of wages, for the release of the Hottentot upon expiration of the term of service, and for his protection from ill-treatment.

Lastly, every Hottentot going about the country was required to be furnished with a pass, either from his commanding officer, if he was in the military service, or his employer, or the magistrate of the district, under penalty of being considered and treated as a vagabond. All persons were empowered to demand a pass from any Hottentot who appeared on their farms, and in case of his not being provided with one, to deliver him up to a field-cornet, *landdrost* or fiscal.¹

“The effect of this clause” (the Pass Law) says the report of the Commission of Enquiry (1828), “has placed the Hottentots under the control of every inhabitant of the Colony and having been enacted at a period when the demand for free labour was encouraged by the prohibition to import slaves, the vigilance of those who were interested in obtaining it was naturally excited in detaining the Hottentots upon frivolous pretexts within the limits of their respective districts.” The Commission found that when, in finishing a contract for service, passes were granted to Hottentots, it was often for so short a period (three to eight days) that in the dispersed state of the population it was impracticable for the Hottentots in question to find new masters, so that they were forced to go back to their old situations or else be thrown into jail as vagrants. “There is no doubt that the contracts made with the Hottentots under the circumstances just described were very disadvantageous to them.”²

Here again, as we have had occasion to remark before, the question of the effect of the law depended very much upon the

¹ “History of South Africa,” Theal. Volume II, pp. 147-8.

² “Commission of Enquiry,” 1828.

character of the persons who were to administer it. In the district of Uitenhage, in which Bethelsdorp was situated, there now appeared upon the scene as *landdrost* a certain Lieutenant-Colonel Cuyler. He was of Dutch-American origin, and a well-trusted commander in the British Army. But he belonged to an objectionable type of officer, such as the military system tends to produce, unless Divine grace manifestly intervenes. In all regular soldierly work Colonel Cuyler could give a good account of himself—courageous, methodical, loyal. His disposition, however, was arbitrary and proud, and whilst capable of kindness and goodwill where men rendered him obedience, he could be harsh and insolent towards those outside the ranks who resisted his demands. A letter lies before me written by Cuyler to Vanderkemp on the 11th August, 1806, complaining that certain Hottentots from Bethelsdorp had trespassed beyond their proper hunting grounds. The writer announces his intention to issue an order that no Hottentot belonging to Bethelsdorp should be allowed to carry a gun. He then quotes an order against Hottentot trespassing, and adds : “ I am now further determined to punish in a most severe corporal manner the first person or persons I may find who have disobeyed the above order.” The words “ severe corporal manner ” are underlined with a broad dash of the pen—the gesture of a savage nature.

It must be admitted that the correspondence between Cuyler and Vanderkemp is not pleasant reading. Vanderkemp very soon summed up the man with whom he had to deal. In May, 1808, in bringing to Cuyler’s notice four instances of oppression, cases of men and women who had been violently carried off into servitude by farmers, Vanderkemp wrote :

Such outrages call loudly to Heaven for justice ! I hope and respectfully request that it may please you to procure these four unhappy sufferers the enjoyment of that liberty to which by nature and the laws of this country they are entitled, and I doubt not but you will penetrate the necessity of putting a stop to these and similar excesses which, being left unpunished, daily increase in number and atrocity, and render this country an execration to every

stranger in whom the last spark of humanity is not yet entirely extinguished.

A year later, in forwarding a similar complaint against a field-cornet, Vanderkemp took a stronger line :

If unfortunately the measures which I expect you'll take in this case should prove ineffectual to put an immediate stop to the outrages of this rogue, the extorted contracts not be rescinded, the injured not be indemnified, I hope you'll not disapprove my representing to his Excellency the Governor how scandalous in your district, by the vilest characters, justice is trampled underfeet, and his Excellency's proclamation treated with contempt ; but as such a communication would inevitably place your own conduct in an unfavourable light, I should be extremely sorry to be brought under this painful necessity.

So it was that whilst in some respects the relations of Bethelsdorp with the outside world were happy enough, as for example in respect to the ministrations which Mr. Read rendered to the garrison at Algoa Bay, and now and again when amongst the farmers some religious quickening brought them into closer sympathy with missionary work, on the whole during these years the situation steadily worsened, and for this the *landdrost* Cuyler was chiefly to blame. As a British officer responsible for the administration of justice, he should not have needed incessant remonstrances from missionaries in order to repress and punish crime. As it was, atrocities of various kinds were of frequent occurrence and went unpunished. The missionary J. G. Ullbricht, writing to the directors shortly after his arrival at Bethelsdorp, reports of the condition of the Hottentot people thus :

Never could I form such an idea of the unfortunate state of this nation as now. And it is something inconceivable to me that any well-thinking person can be, and remain, indifferent about it. It is impossible to live in peace here with the inhabitants of this country if one takes the cause

of Christianity to heart, and that of such an unfortunate nation. If one would help to oppress that poor unfortunate nation then should one be respected and live in peace !

Things like the experience of the native, Jocham, were often happening. This man had been detained by force for two years by farmers of the Elephant's River, then receiving a false pass from a farmer he was taken up as a vagrant. He also received several floggings for instructing Hottentots belonging to farmers.

A set of original documents in the archives of the London Missionary Society relates another occurrence of great barbarity witnessed by Dr. Milton, surgeon to the Cape Regiment at Algoa Bay :

About nine o'clock in the morning of that day (24th May, 1811) I was in company with Mr. Hake of the Twenty-first Dragoons, waiting for breakfast, when my attention was drawn to a spot about sixty yards distant from where I stood by most piteous cries for mercy, and where I perceived a young Boer inhumanly beating a little Hottentot boy. I looked on without interfering for some time, and the Boer desisted, as I was afterwards led to think, to take breath, for in about a minute he recommenced the brutal punishment by knocking him down and repeatedly striking and kicking him in the head, breast and stomach. I again looked on for some time, but finding that he had no idea of desisting, and conceiving the life of the unfortunate little sufferer to be in imminent danger, I went to his rescue, and gave the fellow rather a shove than a blow, who immediately ran away, and in about a minute Mr. De Clark, who I afterwards understood to be father to the Boer, came past me to the boy and knocked him flat before me, where he lay for some time. Mr. De Clark then came up to me and abused both Mr. Hake and myself in the most scurrilous manner, and repeatedly put his clenched fist up to my face.

In all cases of complaint by the natives Vanderkemp was wont to say to them : " When you feel yourself injured, go to

your own corporals or arbiters. Never think of redressing yourself or taking unlawful measures to procure yourself justice. If the arbiters in your opinion do not redress you, come to me. I'll give you my opinion upon the subject. If you are dissatisfied with it, go to the *landdrost*. If the *landdrost* does not do you justice, go to the Governor, and if he neglect you apply to the King, and if you get no satisfaction from him take your case to God, and if He does not hear your prayer and deliver you, you must consider it the will of God that you are oppressed and it becomes you to submit yourself to it and be still and quiet under the hand of God."

But though in speaking to his natives he counselled patience, Vanderkemp allowed his sympathies rather to escape control. In certain instances, as in requisitions for men to serve in Government work, for building the magistrate's house in Uitenhage, and for military service against marauding Kafirs, Vanderkemp refused his assistance, and by his refusal made it more difficult for the authorities to procure the necessary supplies of men. It has to be remembered also that the farmers themselves were often conscript for military service and there was point in the letter of the Governor at the Cape to him (29th April 1807) when he said that in return for the protection and encouragement which the missionary institution received, it was the duty of its head "cheerfully to submit to all orders and requisitions given him by the *landdrost* whilst complaining to His Excellency if in anything he was ill-treated." Unfortunately complaints made even to His Excellency were not investigated with the promptitude which would have encouraged confidence in the administration, and it was very hard for liberal-minded men to stand by and see and hear the continual oppression of the weak and ignorant. If Colonel Cuyler had punished as they merited the wrongs which were perpetrated in his district, he would have had little difficulty in securing from Bethelsdorp full co-operation for all legitimate labour requisitions. As it was, relations between the two men became increasingly unhappy. In January, 1811 the *landdrost* wrote to Vanderkemp declining to allow any further ministrations of the missionaries to the garrisons at Algoa Bay and Uitenhage.

Meanwhile, Mr. Read with Vanderkemp's approval, had laid before the London directors a very grave accusation against the farmers generally and against the administration of justice. The directors gave publicity to his letter, and at last representations from the British Government were made to the Colonial authorities. Justice was certainly somewhat slow-footed, for Read's first letter was dated August 30th, 1808 and it was not until the 8th October, 1810 that the writer was summoned to give evidence concerning his charges before the local *landdrost's* court, and it was only after another appeal had been made to England that in March, 1811, Dr. Vanderkemp and Read were called to Cape Town for the purpose of a full inquiry, which the authorities had at last determined upon.

CHAPTER XX

JUSTICE ?

JUSTICE, it has been said, was somewhat slow-footed in respect to the Hottentot grievances. It may be questioned whether she ever put in an appearance at all.

Vanderkemp and Read took a painful farewell of Bethelsdorp. "Many tears," said Read, "were shed, and our parting was very trying. The business, however, on which we were going was of such importance, and the pleasure we enjoyed through being called to plead for the poor injured Hottentots cut down many a sigh, and dried up many a tear. The poor Hottentots, hearing that we were called to the Cape to lay their complaints before Government, surrounded us. One had lost his father, another his mother, a third a child, etcetera, etcetera." Now it must be admitted that the use of the term "etcetera" in such a connection is the sign of a slovenly mind. In this highly diversified world things do not form themselves into categories ; they have to be sorted. The words we have just quoted from Read's letter were characteristic of the man, an honest, hardworking, sympathetic man ; not, however, one trained in exact habits of mind ; a man liable to many confusions of memory, and only too prone to supplement the lacunæ in his recollections with things of his own imagination. Unhappily Vanderkemp relied more strongly upon his colleague's testimony than was safe. He had allowed Read to make his representations in England without subjecting them to careful cross-examination. He accepted Read's testimony, and sponsored his list of grievances.

The two missionaries reached the Cape on the 27th April, 1811, and at once interviewed the Governor, who received them in the friendliest way, requesting them to state all the cases of murder, violence and oppression committed by the farmers during the period of their residence in the Colony—that is, for

the previous ten years. Vanderkemp states that he communicated "113 cases of Hottentots murdered by Christians, almost all during our residence in this country, of which we have been informed accidentally by our people at Bethelsdorp." It will be observed that he does not directly accuse anyone of murder, only reports what the natives had brought to him, though it is also clear that he did not doubt the truth of most of their statements.

The judicial Commission which the Government appointed immediately got to work. Its proceedings were conducted on a circuit through the Eastern Province, and occupied a considerable time. This inquiry is known in History as the Long Circuit or, more familiarly, the Black Circuit.

No useful purpose could be served by giving in these pages a detailed account of all its proceedings. When it came to grapple with Vanderkemp's list, the number of murder charges was reduced to seventeen, and the cases of violence to fifteen. There were also nineteen cases of default in payment of wages, two of illegal detention of children and five of cattle robberies. No attempt has been made by the leading writers upon the history of Cape Colony to explain the discrepancy between Vanderkemp's list of a hundred and thirteen murders and the seventeen cases which were actually tried. It is assumed by both Dr. Theal¹ and by Sir George Cory² that the missionaries had been grossly deceived by lying natives, or themselves were untruthful men. One has to admit, as already has been suggested, some reduction in the list, on account of Mr. Read's temperamental defects. But there is far more in the discrepancy than can thus be accounted for. A rational explanation is probable if we consider the different attitude to murder taken by ordinary, honest, and compassionate men and the technical attitude of lawyers. Probably in very many instances the cases submitted were ruled out of court as not coming under the legal term of "capital offence." Thus in 1806, when the farm of Christoffel Botha near Algoa Bay was attacked by Kafirs and the whole of his cattle driven off, this man, summoning his servants and setting off in pursuit, succeeded in

¹*Op. cit.*, p. 165.

²*Op. cit.*, Volume I, p. 212, ff.

recapturing all his property and at the same time shot four of the thieves. Incidents of this kind were frequent. In this instance it is more than likely that the Kafirs were retaliating for invasion of what they held to be their own traditional hunting grounds. They were punished by the loss of four of their own people. Neither the law authorities then nor, apparently, Sir George Cory now, would consider that these were murders. Unquestionably Vanderkemp held that they were.

The issue of the Black Circuit was a fiasco. One woman and six men only were found guilty of violence, and were sentenced to various trifling punishments. Five murder charges were held over for a later inquiry. In several instances the accused appear to have pleaded that death took place from natural causes and they were merely fined for not having reported the occurrence.

So far as personal violence, short of actual murder, was concerned, naturally it must have been difficult to obtain medical evidence when the alleged offence had been committed some years before. One charge concerned a Hottentot servant named Katharyn Stephen. Ten witnesses gave evidence that this child—she was but fourteen and a half years old—had been stripped and laid on the kitchen floor and there held while she was flogged till the blood came. Her offence was taking a bowl of victuals before it was given to her. Dr. van Colff testified to the severity of the wounds inflicted. The two culprits involved in this case got off with fines of £12 plus costs.

Sir George Cory, in his account of the Black Circuit, observes: "The 'severe discipline' or the brutal floggings of the Army and Navy at that date would probably have furnished cases equal to anything brought forward on the Black Circuit." This appeal for mitigation in an historical verdict is one which cannot be allowed by any man who exercises an ethical principle. Rather he will agree with that great master of history, Lord Acton, when he closed his Cambridge inaugural lecture on the study of history with an appeal to students not to derogate the moral quality of their judgments. "I exhort you," he said, "never to debase the moral currency or to lower the standard of rectitude, but to try others by the final maxim

that governs your own lives, and to suffer no man and no cause to escape the underlying penalty which history has the power to inflict on wrong. The plea in extenuation of guilt and mitigation of punishment is perpetual. At every step we are met by arguments which go to excuse, to palliate, to confound right and wrong, and reduce the just man to the level of the reprobate. The men who plot to baffle and resist us are, first of all, those who made history what it has become." He went on to condemn those who hesitate to uphold a high standard of morality in the writing of history, "So that we have no common code; our moral notions are always fluid; and you must consider the times, the class from which men sprang, the surrounding influences, the masters in their schools, the preachers in their pulpits, the movement they obscurely obeyed, and so on, until responsibility is merged in numbers, and not a culprit is left for execution."¹

Moreover, if of those cruelties which Sir George Cory records and which he himself admits were of a "heartrending" character, it is to be said by way of palliation that in the same period there were brutal floggings in the Army and Navy, are we not brought into some confusion of thought? For the very fact which Sir George alleges, that judicial punishments at that time were often of a brutal character, supplies us with a measure for estimating, not the crime of the Boer, but the punishment which was meted out to him. To punish such a crime as that committed upon Katharyn Stephen with a fine at all was a miscarriage of justice. Without desiring to hark back to the Hebrew principle of an "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" here was a deed which certainly called for something more drastic than a trumpery fine.

Reviewing the whole of these proceedings, it is impossible not to feel that the scales were weighted against the unfortunate natives. The word of a farmer was accounted of more value than the word of a missionary. That of a Hottentot received no consideration unless supported by overwhelming evidence. Justice should be even-handed, and to be that it is needful sometimes to take into account the disabilities under which ignorant and timid people appear in a law-court. On

¹" *Lectures on Modern History*," pp. 24-5.

his first summons to give evidence before the Governor, Read had pointed out the difficulty of marshalling Hottentot testimonies. In a letter dated October 19th, 1810, he spoke of the "wellknown rooted dread that reigns in the breast of every Hottentot, at least in these distant districts, to give information against any Boer upon any subject. He considers himself endangering his life and sacrificing himself to the resentment of all the connections of those against whom he is called to bear witness." And again, in writing to a friend he observes : "When you address yourself to them they hide their faces in their karosses or garments of sheepskins and turn their backs to you." Vanderkemp records the instance of a slave who was charged at Cape Town with theft, and admitted it, but on coming to Bethelsdorp denied the accusation in the firmest way. He said he had been forced at the Cape to confess it, because that was the prevailing rule there, "namely that whatever a Christian asserts, a slave must not think to contradict." On the Black Circuit the Hottentots had but a very poor chance of securing Justice.

Colonel Cuyler cleared his own reputation to the satisfaction of the court, and of his friends, as also apparently to that of certain modern writers. The Commission of 1828, however, censured him for the distinctions he made between Colonial and native in the administration of justice. His later career was such that under pressure of the Home Government he judged it best to resign his office.

The closing proceedings of the Black Circuit included a visit to Bethelsdorp upon the condition of which the judges reported unfavourably. There was much, indeed, that called for new effort there. Vanderkemp's failing health and the incessant strife with Cuyler had had their natural consequences. James Read, excellent and amiable as he was, had not the requisite gifts for the first place in such an institution, and unquestionably everything needed a tightening-up and a firmer insistence upon rule and method.

In one particular, too, the good name of the institution was gravely compromised. There were some cases of venereal disease amongst the people. The enemies of the place naturally made capital of this. Read had reported in a letter of July,

1811, that such cases existed, but not, he observed, amongst "those who stay here continually." They were cases of persons who came from the farms ; the garrison at Algoa Bay was also a source of the trouble, so much so that its medical officer in the interests of the men made complaint of Bethelsdorp!¹ In affairs of this kind much depends upon the point of view. Too commonly the burden of the sin falls more upon its chief victim—the woman. The missionaries did not refuse admission to poor creatures who had been made the slaves of white men's unregulated passions, and so by their very attitude of compassion they exposed themselves to the same taunt which was levelled against their Master Himself when He was accused of being a friend of publicans and sinners.

As we draw to a close in this melancholy business, it may naturally be asked why revive a tale of "old, unhappy, far-off things" ? The governor who succeeded Lord Caledon, and had to report the issue of the inquiry to the Colonial Office, said he considered that there were faults on both sides, and that it would be best to bury all these things in oblivion. Doubtless both sides were to blame, but there was all the difference of a mote from a beam between the somewhat indiscriminate missionary campaign against cruelty, and the offences which undoubtedly came to light. A Victorian novelist, Charles Reade, rightly observes of cruelty : "No crime is so thoroughly without excuse as this. Other crimes have sometimes an adequate temptation—this never. The path to other crimes is downhill ; to cruelty is uphill. In the very act, nature, who is on the side of some crimes, cries out within us against this monstrous sin."²

Apart, however, from the fact that the story of the subject of this book could not have been told without some handling of these deplorable circumstances, the truth must be faced that the warfare for racial justice in which Vanderkemp was so great a protagonist is not yet over. The inheritance of that time continued and still persists. After he left Graaf Reinet the pulpit in which he had preached was publicly washed,

¹ Sir George Cory duly records this fact, but, characteristically, omits all reference to the missionaries' attitude to the matter. *Op. cit.*, p. 213.

² "It's Never Too Late To Mend," Chapter XV.

because he had proclaimed from it Christ's truth to the Hottentots. A little later an inscription was pasted up over the door of a certain church : "Hottentots and dogs forbidden to enter."¹ And what are we to think of so recent an incident as that attested by Mr. C. F. Andrews² when Mr. Gandhi was turned away from the doors of an Anglican Church in South Africa because he was a coloured man ? Or again, how can Christian people justify the treatment of so great a scholar as the late Dr. Aggrey, when, on making the journey from the Cape to England, he was required always to take his meals at a dining-table apart from white men ?³ Yet more unhappy than the operation of such social customs, is the positive injustice with which the black people are treated in regard to the distribution of land, and by the recent colour-bar legislation which shuts them out from employment in most skilled occupations.⁴ Against such conditions the Christian Church ought to enter a united and emphatic protest. The whole genius of the Gospel strikes the note of universality. In Christ there is neither bond nor free. All who have entered into fellowship with Him are endued with a moral potency of infinite extent. There can be no limit to the possibilities of their regeneration. Made partakers of the Divine Nature, how can they be incapable of using profitably to themselves and to society the stored heritage of mankind ? Moreover, as a matter of fact the achievements of black men not only in industry but also in science, literature and art vindicate this doctrine beyond all dispute.⁵

¹ Philips' " *Researches in South Africa*," Volume I.

² " *The Hibbert Journal*," October, 1930.

³ " *Aggrey of Africa*," by Edwin W. Smith, p. 183.

⁴ See " *White and Black in Africa*," by J. H. Oldham (1930), pp. 12-17.

⁵ For striking evidence of this see " *The Future of The Negro : Some Chapters in the Development of a Race*," by Brigadier-General Sir Gordon Guggisberg, late Governor of the Gold Coast, and A. G. Fraser, M.A. of Achimota.

CHAPTER XXI

FORWARD INTO LIGHT

IT has seemed best to complete the story of the Black Circuit before relating further the life of Dr. Vanderkemp in Cape Town. But beyond giving to the Governor the information he possessed concerning the relations of the Colonials and the natives in the Eastern Province, he had nothing to do with the investigation which followed. Had he appeared before the Circuit Court when it reached the neighbourhood of Bethelsdorp, it is possible that his acuter mind might have helped Read to substantiate more fully his accusations. This, however, was not to be.

He had brought his wife and children with him to Cape Town, and lived there in his own hired house, Read being with him for a few months. He was never idle, but with the true instinct of a missionary was keen to take advantage of every opening which might present itself.

On June 7th, 1811, the whole town was shaken with an earthquake. At the time troops were passing down the street where the missionaries lodged, and the tremendous noise which accompanied the shock suggested the operations of war. Chimneys crashed to the ground. The walls of many houses, including Vanderkemp's, were rent. The people rushed into the streets. Even the sick were carried out in their beds. The houses rose and fell visibly. Nothing is said to be more nerve-racking than an earthquake, and, as generally happens, this shock affected the spiritual structures of men as well as their earthly homes. Many who ordinarily were indifferent to religion were shaken in conscience and crowded to the churches. Prayer meetings revived. During one such gathering three days later, there came a terrific rush of wind, followed by another earth tremor, creating even in the devout minds of those assembled for prayer something like panic which, how-

ever, was tranquillised by the reading of the ninety-first Psalm. Yet a further visitation of the same order, though less severe, happened on the 19th June. The spiritual effects of these disasters followed a usual course. When the trouble was over, those who had repented of their sins through terror mostly went back to them. A percentage, however, were inclined to better things, and the really religious did not fail to learn the lesson of the transitoriness of all earthly things. Thus the churches benefited to some extent, and the gospel was listened to more earnestly. Vanderkemp was eager to do what he could in conjunction with the local ministers and the Missionary Society. He had, however, never found the latter body compliant to his wishes. Its directors did not share his conceptions as to the status of the natives, and they were apt to divert missionary recruits to work amongst the Colonials—work which was really of vital importance, but which seemed to Vanderkemp to be secondary to the true missionary vocation. “Their conduct,” said Vanderkemp in a letter about the South African Missionary Society, “has always been very grievous to me,” and again he wrote of them as “that indolent body.”

The lack of sympathy between himself and the church people at Cape Town precluded much co-operation, but he had plenty to do in other ways. The black people crowded to his meetings, knowing that here was one who loved them and understood them. Moreover, his mind was working upon administrative problems and the never-relinquished project of a mission to Madagascar.

In regard to the first of these concerns, he was in correspondence with the London directors. The position at the Cape badly needed organisation. A considerable number of men was now at work in different parts, each a law to himself, and each feeling at liberty to draw upon the Society's credit at the Cape for whatever financial support he deemed necessary. The directors, aware of the evils inevitable in such a situation, desired Vanderkemp to act as their superintendent at the Cape, and to have authority over all their South African servants. To many a man of his years and past privations, such a position would have been welcome. A quiet and comfortable home in

Cape Town, leisure for study, Committee meetings, secretarial work, civilised society and intercourse with many interesting people coming and going between Europe and the East—for there was no Suez Canal in those days—might have been thought to constitute a legitimate mode of life for a missionary who had reached the age of sixty-four. But Vanderkemp was not built that way. Still, as in earlier days, his eyes searched for a path of missionary advance. Even before he had left Bethelsdorp he had requested a man in Cape Town to look out for a vessel sailing to Madagascar which might be able to pick him up at Algoa Bay, and he had definitely applied to the Governor for permission to make that journey. It seemed to him that with a staff of seven missionaries at Bethelsdorp, as was the case in 1810, he and one or two others could easily be spared.

The desire to go undoubtedly had been increased through the misery of his incessant difficulties with Colonel Cuyler. In a letter written about that time, he said to a friend: "I would go anywhere to escape from my present situation. I cannot remain much longer at Bethelsdorp; my spirits are broken and I am bowed down by the *landdrost* Cuyler's continual oppressions of the Hottentots." When he reached Cape Town for the purpose of the public inquiry, his desire for Madagascar seemed at last within reach of attainment. He allowed Read to return alone to Bethelsdorp, and whilst acting as a senior missionary in consultation with colleagues who came to him from different parts to seek his guidance and help, quietly awaited the issue of a somewhat complicated situation. Matters of moment often called for his intervention. Thus one of the missionaries, who had suffered the loss of cattle through some marauding natives, actually applied for a Boer commando to undertake a punitive expedition on his behalf. Vanderkemp's inquiries into the matter led him to suspect that the thieves were retaliating upon white men, but unhappily had fixed upon the wrong person. It took some earnest discussion and pleading with the wronged missionary to dissuade him from the appeal to force. Eventually a peaceable conclusion of the trouble was achieved through Vanderkemp's means.

With regard to the Madagascar mission, it appeared to him best that Read, who had been with him at Bethelsdorp from the first, should remain in charge there, and he fixed upon Mr. Carl Pacalt as a suitable colleague to join himself in the new venture. Mr. Pacalt showed some reluctance to respond. A letter written by him in February of that year from Bethelsdorp, before Vanderkemp had been summoned to Cape Town, explains his reluctance and throws an interesting light upon the latter's character. The writer's English betrays his foreign nationality, but it is piquant and clear :

In respect to baptising the people, we are not permitted, because the Pope is removed from Rome to Bethelsdorp, as the brethren here express it. Whether the dear directors have authorised Dr. Vanderkemp to do it be pleased to mention in the next letter, otherwise a great dispute shall take place among the brethren. . . . If a brother missionary spans oxen in the waggon to fetch wood in the forest and he is not pleased with it "Span out the oxen—I will not have it," and many other things take place which the dear directors know nothing of, for everything which he does not approve of he accounts as coming from the Devil. Then one must be silent, because Dr. Vanderkemp is old.

It is not surprising that the "dear directors" should have written to Vanderkemp suggesting, though without any supporting reasons, that Mr. Pacalt was not quite the most suitable man to accompany him to Madagascar. In the meantime, however, Pacalt had waived his objections to his chief's Papistical ways. He arrived in Cape Town on the 30th October for the purpose of the new mission. The very next day, however, Vanderkemp received a further letter from the directors urging him to abandon Madagascar and to stay in Cape Town as their missionary superintendent. They gave as their reasons his advanced years and his wife's bad health. That letter cast him down, and in his reply there occurs the only sentence which savours of tartness, in all his long correspondence with the directors : "I hope you'll allow me to estimate the weight of these two objections myself." But having said that, he

estimated them in much the same way as they did. There was, moreover, now an additional objection to the Madagascar proposal. It was represented to him by someone (not connected with missionary work) that for him to leave the Cape, before the judicial inquiry into the Hottentot grievances had been concluded, would look like a desertion of the native cause. That decided him to remain, but it was with a sinking heart and a sense of ruin impending upon all his eager hopes. He turned again to administrative problems. He agreed to undertake the position which the directors had proposed to him, only he demurred to the title "superintendent," and suggested instead "inspector" if with it there went the rank of an overseas director. He thought, he said, that the term "superintendent" would be resented by the missionaries. Perhaps the difference between the two words in the matter of authority may seem to us negligible, but it is worth noticing that, despite Mr. Pacalt's view of his character, Vanderkemp was desirous now, as he had been when he first landed at the Cape, not to allow his greater learning, attainments, or age, to be the cause of any breach between himself and his less-educated colleagues. If he could have seen that letter of Pacalt's about him he would have been astounded, and sorrowfully would have betaken himself to some lonely spot and there wrestled over it in self-examination and prayer. Always he appears as a man whose inner life was lived either in strong light, or in deep shadow. It had no half-tones. In matters of faith and in judgment of men and affairs his convictions were sharp and definite. As in his youth, when a prank upon the river nearly ended his days, so in the entire history of his soul he was one who lived dangerously—venturing wholly upon the unseen for support and guidance, and accepting, perhaps too readily, the vivid colours of first impressions. He had that downrightness of temper which goes so often with the successful military man. Even when contending for civil and religious liberty, he allowed little freedom for others to state their case.

He drew up a scheme of regulations for the future conduct of the London Missionary Society in South Africa. The document, which he completed and signed on November 10th,

1811, opens in the following characteristically uncompromising terms: "Whereas the directors of the London Missionary Society, displeased on account of the conduct of some missionary brethren, as well in respect to the unnecessary and extravagant expenses made by them at the charge of the Society as to their frequent and long protracted absence from the place of their destinations." The details of his scheme need not be recorded here. They were thought out with a continual reference to economy and efficiency. He was keen to save the home Society from needless expense, knowing so well how many other important claims it had to meet. He himself had been an unpaid missionary from the first, and he looked to others, wherever possible, to follow his example. He objected, he said, to the use of the term "stipend" or "salary" in relation to such payments to missionaries as were necessary, preferring the word "subsidy". The missionary, he held, should give himself and all he possessed to the work, and only accept support from the Society if really unable to maintain himself. Whatever may be thought of his plea, it is certain that a more disinterested man has never served the cause of foreign missions.

Having circulated a copy of his proposed regulations amongst his colleagues, he suggested to the directors that Mr. Read should take his place in the event of his departure to Madagascar, or of his death. That second alternative was now the more probable. He became very weak, and suffered attacks of an illness which had troubled him at intervals for some years past. Dark shadows fell upon his spirit. No man whose heart is generous can endure for long the enmity of his fellows. We see full well a psychological justification for our Lord's extension of the law against murder from violent act to angry word. For years Vanderkemp had been the object of popular execration amongst the Colonists. His life had been threatened more than once. Such things told upon him, as they did upon his Master before him. Now at Cape Town, in much bewilderment as to his true course of action, he entered into that state of spiritual eclipse which the mystics call the "dark night of the soul"—a state which, like the darkest hour of earthly night, often precedes a great and wonderful dawn. Unseen hands

were leading him day by day through sorrow and depression towards a vision of that infinite love in which the sins of all men, even of the cruel, are at last consumed. Early in December he began to write a letter to the directors about business matters, but never finished it. To Mrs. Smith, who was with him constantly, he confessed a feeling of extreme weakness, and a wish to settle his personal affairs. Then he lay down, conscious that his work was done. He had ever been a man's man, as well as one to attract women, and two soldiers who shared his faith, Kenneth Anderson of the Ninety-third Regiment, and William Pinnell of the Twenty-first Light Dragoon Guards visited him, and offered prayer at his bedside. In those days the soul's departure out of this world had its own pageantry and solemn searching for testimony. So his little household gathered about him. His dark-featured wife, Sara, holding in her arms her baby Africanus, was there. We see little Cornelius, with troubled eyes, clambering on his bed. Mrs. Smith bent over him asking: "My dear friend, what is the state of your mind?" He smiled, and said: "All is well." "Is it light or darkness?" From the confines of the seen and unseen came back the glad response: "Light!" So he passed on. It was December 19th, 1811.

It is said that Cape Town gave him a great funeral. "He was followed to the grave by some of the first persons in the Cape, the fiscal, several members of the court of justice, the ministers of the Reformed and Lutheran church, some military officers, vast numbers of the Cape inhabitants, many pious soldiers of the different regiments; yea, a great part of the Cape, made their appearance on the occasion." Considering all that had gone before, this record from the Bethelsdorp report of 1812 makes strange reading. But to purify our contentions, abstracting therefrom the savour of bitterness, is one of the kindly offices of Death. He is gone, we say. Perhaps, after all, we misjudged. There is a higher court.

Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistening foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes

And perfect witness of all-judging Jove ;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in Heaven expect thy meed.

Something, perhaps, of Vanderkemp's essential greatness dawned upon the public mind of Cape Colony as those " vast numbers " of men and women wended their way to his grave. Even such as were only slightly informed about him knew he had been a doughty fighter—one who never hesitated to utter his convictions in forcible speech, who never cringed before the exalted, nor bowed before the fury of a mob. Those who had known him more intimately could praise with discrimination, as History finally will do. Generous in giving of his best, he was generous, too, in the range of his hopes for human nature. He believed in the transforming power of the Spirit of God, not in the first place because Church or Bible declared it, but because in his own heart he had heard *the still, small voice*—authentic, indisputable and full of grace.

He was the author of a few philosophical and theological works, but it is not by these he is remembered.

He was not a conspicuous success as the head of an industrial mission, although his principles therein were excellent.

He was a great evangelist. He brought many a poor African into the Kingdom of God. He helped many to a new sense of self-respect.

Although he laboured only some sixteen months in Kafirland the influence of his life there remained long after he had left, like the scent of one of its lions that lies all day upon the forest tracks.

The gratitude and love of the Hottentot people he served for eleven years were no scant measure of his devotion to their needs.

Side by side with all his evangelism there ever wrought in him a passion for racial justice, and this was a new thing at the Cape. Someone, indeed, had to begin to break down the firmly-established sentiment that it was the destiny of the African to be *a servant of servants unto his brethren*.¹ In the

¹See Genesis IX. 22ff.—a passage which in Vanderkemp's day was often quoted as affording Biblical authority for the serfdom of the black man.

diary of a great bishop of modern times, Dr. Westcott, there occurs a self-revealing passage in which the writer admits the existence of certain ecclesiastical evils and adds: "Fighting needs to be done, and I alas! am no fighter." Certainly it is not every Christian teacher who has the requisite courage, vigour and perspicacity to assail an inheritance of evil. But to some the bugle-call comes with an insistence which they can only ignore at the price of moral disintegration. Vanderkemp was a Christian of that type. It was his distinctive achievement that, believing in the Gospel of Christ as a universal principle, he so preached it and by many an act of pity and love so embodied it, as to erect a challenging standard before his fellow-Europeans, both Dutch and British—a higher moral standard than they had visualised before.

He was a brave man and self-consistent. *And he being dead yet speaketh.* The issues he raised are still undetermined. Upon the Christian solution of the native problem in South Africa the future happiness and prosperity of that richly-endowed country must ultimately depend. What has been termed "The rising tide of Colour against the White man's supremacy" will be either a devastating flood, or a sea of cleansing for all inter-racial relations. That it is a rising tide only the blindest will deny. The question that is still uncertain is the nature of its impact upon the white man's dominion. That, most surely, will turn upon the character of the men and women who represent the Christian religion. It is for them to determine the human rights and duties involved in the spirit of the apostolic affirmation of human solidarity. If they will do this boldly, not fearing the frowns of such as revere not Christ, they will find it within their own power to abbreviate any era of conflict which may intervene before the triumph of the Divine Kingdom. Afar off, but daily less remote, that Kingdom grows visible. The earth must eventually become *a land of uprightness*, in which men of every race and colour dwell together in a fellowship of mutual service. And the followers of the Son of Man may take courage from those thoughts which animated Wordsworth in his famous sonnet to Toussaint L'Ouverture, when, fallen from his leadership of a negro people, that heroic man lay in a French prison amid the hard con-

ditions of the Jura—and the words apply yet more fitly to John Vanderkemp, the protagonist of negro liberty in Africa,

Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee ; air, earth and skies ;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee ; thou hast great allies ;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

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